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"NO ROOM IN THE INN."

HER GIFT.

A dear little mother is waiting apart—
  The mother of children three.
"My Lord," she cries, in the hush of her heart,
  "Wilt thou take a gift from me?
I have heard the angels sing thy birth,
  I have followed thy shining star,
And here at the shrine of all the earth,
  Lo! I and my children are.

"And all in the glow of the Christmas morn,
  My gold to lay at Thy feet,
I am leading my darlings with care unworn,
  With brows that are pure and sweet.
Oh never had gems from the mines such worth
  As the treasure to-day I bring
To the beautiful shrine of all the earth,
  To the glorious Infant King.

"My children three, with their waving hair,
  And the fearless look in their eyes,
They lisp thy name in the vesper prayer,
  And at matins when they rise,
Nothing they know of the dole and dearth
  Of souls that with sin have striven;
They kneel at the shrine of all the earth,
  'Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

They stand in the shadow of pine and fir;
  They listen, and floating through
They catch the answer that's sent to her
  Through a rift in the upper blue:
"Since the Christ-child came to the weary earth
  No gifts are to him so sweet
As the children's hearts, with their joy and mirth,
  Lovingly brought to his feet."

—MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

NO ROOM IN THE INN.

"There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky,
There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry;
And the star rains its fire, while the beautiful sing,
And the manger at Bethlehem cradles a King."

Only a manger, for there was no room for him in the inn, and our hearts now swell with indignation and sorrow at the thought, and we think, "Oh, if only we had been there how differently we should have acted. We surely would have recognized the infant king to whom all the prophecies pointed and in whom they all centred."

But stop a moment! What are we doing with him now? The manger after all may not have been such a poor bed as we imagine. The average farmer in Palestine to-day as then, shelters his animals under the same roof and often in the same room with himself. The "mangers" or "cribs," built of stone and mortar in the shape of a box or kneading trough, are arranged along the two sides of the room which are devoted to the cattle; while the other sides, the floor of which is raised about two feet, are devoted to the use of the family. In the summertime when these mangers are cleaned out and whitewashed, as they often are, Dr. Thomson assures us that they make not at all a bad place for a baby to sleep in, and that his own children have slept in them very often.

"But," we hear a bright boy exclaim, "it was not the best place. He should have had the very best place in the house!" Ah! that is it! The very best place in the house, the first place.

But it is very easy to say what we would have done. Let us stop a moment and find what we are doing now. Jesus is with us now just as surely as he was with the people of Bethlehem then. He chooses now to have his dwelling place in our hearts. How is it then? Are we really giving him the first place? Think a moment. Which is really first with us in our every day lives? Is it his wish or our own pleasure? Do we always consult his interests before our own? Always? When we are in doubt as to which of two things to do, do we take the one we like best, or do we stop and ask him which he would have us do? When we are tempted to a hasty word do we pause and say a kind word instead? Do we make his wishes our rule in every thought and word and deed? If we have not, shall we not begin anew at this blessed Christmas time, and consecrate ourselves wholly to him? Shall we not from this time forth give not only the best place in our hearts, but our whole selves, to let him use us wholly in his service? Let us do it and see if by next Christmas time we shall not have realized more fully than ever before the fulfilment of the angels' song, in its alternate rendering, "Peace on earth to men of good will."—*Ed. Messenger.*

A HOLIDAY PARASITE.

The mistletoe has always been an important guest at English winter festivities from the time of the ancient Druids until now. The evergreen plant that was held in great veneration by the priests of Britain, is now valued next to the Christmas-tree, Every year it becomes more popular. The house that has not at this season a twig of mistletoe perched over some doorway or under a prominent chandelier has either no children in it, or is unable to procure the rare parasite.

The derivation of the word is from the German word mist, which is supposed to have reference to the belief that the seeds are deposited by birds who eat the berries, and the Norwegian word tein, the prong of a tree or twig. Stormonth's dictionary spells the word misletoe.

The shrub extends from Sweden to the Mediterranean. It is common in the southern counties of England, where it grows upon many varieties of trees, especially the apple tree, which it sometimes kills. The English variety is the *loranthacee viscum.*

The American mistletoe is quite different from its English cousin. It has leaves of a more yellowish green; its stem is brittle and green-black, and it has translucent pearl-like berries. Nuttall, an American naturalist, born in England, made a new genus for it, and called it *phoradendron* (borne to a tree). What we see in the Christmas books is the variety known as *P. flavescens.*

The way to get mistletoe in South Carolina is like the way of the transgressor. You cannot make it easy. Like all sinners you need a guide. Take one, otherwise you will not get much. The plant always attaches itself to trees in swamps or very near them.

Your guide soon discovers the coy parasite at the top of some oak or gum tree, right in the middle of a large pool of water. Rubber boots are a desperate need. You will be surprised to find them useful in climbing as well as in wading.

The trees are desolate and bare, their deadness unrelieved except by the patches of brilliant green on the topmost branches. The effect is so romantic, the prize so inaccessible, that before you start the dangerous climb, with mistletoe above, and water below to deaden a possible or rather probable fall, you wonder how many blushing maids will be kissed under those branches.

That climb will not be easy. You are entangled in dead limbs, scratchy boughs, that would almost discourage a bruin. It will take you fully a quarter of an hour to see to the top. Then you will stand on a dead swaying arm, with the precious green leaves on all sides of you.

Fortunately, the mistletoe's brittleness makes it easy to break is off bit by bit, otherwise you would have been at your wits' end to get any at all. Down the berried branches drop, fully sixty feet, until the tree is stripped bare.

Then the descent! Virgil says, "*Facilis descensus.*" The dignified poet would have written differently if he had gone up a dead oak-tree after mistletoe. You will, however, have skilfully accomplished your undertaking until you are about twenty feet from the bog, when a dead limb breaks, and away you go—hands barked, shins barked. The guide and his dog bark, too.

You end ignominiously in mistletoe and water up to your knees; but who cares? Every bruise or scratch is equivalent to a box going North.—*Exchange.*

ITSELF PRODUCES DISEASE.

Professor Simpson, of the Medical Faculty, gave the valedictory address to the medical graduates in Edinburgh University, on August 1, and dealt with the ethical and spiritual as well as the scientific aspect of their future profession. They would soon prove in their practice, he told them, in regard to the alcohol, that its habitual use itself produces diseases; that it aggravates other diseases; that it renders its habitual users more susceptible to diseases; that it lessens their chances of recovery; and that in disease the alcoholist gets less benefit from stimulants than the abstainer. They must be very careful how they prescribe its use.

THE LEGEND OF THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

BY V. G. RAMSEY.

The plant known as the Christmas Rose is said to blossom at Christmas time as far north as *sixty degrees.*

There was joy in the royal palace,
  For, back with its shattered band,
Came the brave young prince, Rudolphus,
  From the wars in the Holy Land.

The hills were alight with bonfires,
  The frozen fiords were aglow,
And the North-light's crimson lances
  Had tinged the untrodden snow.

When, with royal banners streaming,
  And a flash of laboring oar,
In the welcoming harbor of Stockholm,
  His good ships came to the shore,

There was joy for the prince returning,
  As the news spread far and wide;
And joy for a Saviour given—
  For this was the Christmas tide.

The king had summoned his vassals,
  And gladly they came to his call
To offer the prince their homage,
  And to feast in the palace hall.

Ah, that was a royal banquet!
  And the king, as he poured the wine,
Cried, "Tell us, O prince Rudolphus,
  Of the far-off Palestine.

"How speedeth the holy conflict
  Where the Cross and the Crescent meet?
And what is the sin of Christ's people,
  That the conquest is not complete?"

Then the prince, all scarred from the battles
  And wearing the Red Cross sign,
Recounted the terrible warfare
  That raged round the Holy shrine.

But the face of the hero was clouded,
  And his brave eyes were dimmed with the pain
As he cried, "I am heart-sick and weary
  For the blood that is offered in vain.

"For envy is rending our banners,
  Ambition, and hatred and pride
Are leading our host to their ruin,
  And shaming the Crucified.

"We have fought in the Holy City,
  And its stones with our blood are red;
And over the mountains and deserts,
  The bones of our comrades are spread.

"But our prayers and our labors avail not,—
  The gain of the past is our loss—.
The Infidel mocks at our sorrow,
  And the Crescent supplanteth the Cross.

"At midnight I knelt in the garden
  Where the pitying Jesus had prayed—
Dismayed and o'erwhelmed by our losses—
  I wept that His cause was betrayed.

"Then one, like a prophet, beside me
  Said, 'The Christ is risen indeed,
And ne'er of this empty chamber
  Will thy glorious Lord have need.

"'Then weep not, but know that his kingdom
  Comes not by the power of the sword,
He shall conquer and rule o'er the nations
  By the might of his wonderful word.'

"Then stooping he plucked up and gave me
  This plant which had grown by my side,
And he said, 'To thy home thou shalt bear it,
  And there, at the Christmas tide,

"'It shall bloom in its snow-white beauty,
  At the hour of the dear Lord's birth,
A sign that his love shall conquer,
  And his peace shall reign in the earth.'

"Behold o'er the seas I have borne it,
  And here it will bud and bloom—
This plant of the Southern summers—
  In our winter's frost and gloom."

Next morn, in the palace window,
  Bloomed the beautiful Christmas Rose,
As pure as the water lily,
  As white as the mountain snows!

Said the mother of Prince Rudolphus,
  The good and beautiful queen,
"Praise Christ for the love and mercy
  In the miracle we have seen.

"Henceforth in our stormy North-land—
  Till fighting and war shall cease,—
At the Christmas time shall blossom
  This beautiful sign of peace."

DRILL THE CHILDREN.

Are you hammering away at the commandments diligently? Do not forget that before one of your scholars is promoted he ought, at least, to be able to repeat the Lord's prayer, and the Decalogue. The former even the dullest can soon learn by hearing it repeated, and some of the commandments may be also easily learned. The longer and the harder ones will require long and hard efforts on the part of both teacher and scholar. There's nothing for it but parrotlike repetition. "Visiting the iniquities" may be as much of a morsel—and it is not a small one, either,—as the class can digest at one time; a clause added, "of the father," and later, "upon the children," and repeated again and again, till the words come mechanically, will make them familiar with that hard second commandment. Never mind if that and the fourth take two months. The rest will come easily.—*Golden Rule.*

MEN are born with two eyes, but with one tongue, in order that they should see twice as much as they say.—*Colton.*

SCHOLARS' NOTES.

(From Westminster Question Book.)

LESSON XIII.—DECEMBER 28, 1890.

REVIEW.—Luke 20-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Rev. 5:13.

HOME READINGS.

M. Luke 20.—Lesson I.
T. Luke 21.—Intermediate History.
W. Luke 22:1-23.—Lesson II.
Th. Luke 22:24-71.—Lessons III., IV., V.
F. Luke 23:1-25.—Lessons VI., VII.
S. Luke 23:26-56.—Lesson VIII.
S. Luke 24.—Lessons IX., X., XI., XII.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

Singing.—
Superintendent.—How did Jesus represent the privileges of the Jewish people?
School.—Under the figure of a vineyard.
Supt.—What doom did he pronounce upon them for their rejection of him?
School.—The Lord of the vineyard shall destroy them and give the vineyard to others.
Supt.—At the Lord's Supper what did Jesus say to his disciples when he gave them the bread?
School.—This is my body which is given for you.
Supt.—What did he say when he gave them the cup?
School.—This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
Supt.—What was the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane?
School.—Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done.
Singing.—
Supt.—Who guided those who took Jesus?
School.—Judas, one of the twelve.
Supt.—What followed the betrayal?
School.—They took Jesus, and led him to the high priest's house.
Supt.—On what charge was Jesus condemned to death?
School.—For blasphemy in saying that he was the Son of God.
Supt.—Why did the council lead Jesus to Pilate?
School.—That he might order him to be crucified.
Supt.—What did Pilate say after he had examined Jesus?
School.—I find no fault in this man.
Supt.—To whom did Pilate send him?
School.—As soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod.
Supt.—What did Herod do with Jesus?
School.—He mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.
Supt.—What did the Jews say when Pilate would have released him?
School.—They cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.
Supt.—What did Pilate do?
School.—Pilate gave sentence as they required.
Supt.—What superscription was placed over Jesus on the cross?
School.—This is the King of the Jews.
Supt.—What events occurred during the crucifixion?
School.—The sun was darkened and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.
Supt.—What were the last words of Jesus?
School.—Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.
Singing.—
Supt.—What did the angels say to the women at the sepulchre?
School.—Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.
Supt.—To whom did the risen Saviour first appear?
School.—He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.
Supt.—What instructions did he give to two disciples on the way to Emmaus?
School.—He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.
Supt.—Did these disciples know who was talking with them?
School.—Their eyes were holden that they should not know him.
Supt.—What took place as he sat at meat with them?
School.—Their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.
Supt.—What charge did he give to the apostles?
School.—That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
Supt.—What occurred forty days after the resurrection?
School.—He led them out as far as Bethany, and while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up to heaven.
Supt.—What did the disciples then do?
School.—They returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.
Singing.—
Review-drill on titles, Golden Texts, Lesson Plans, Questions for Review.
Singing.—

JOE'S SEARCH FOR SANTA CLAUS.

BY IRVING BACHELLOR.

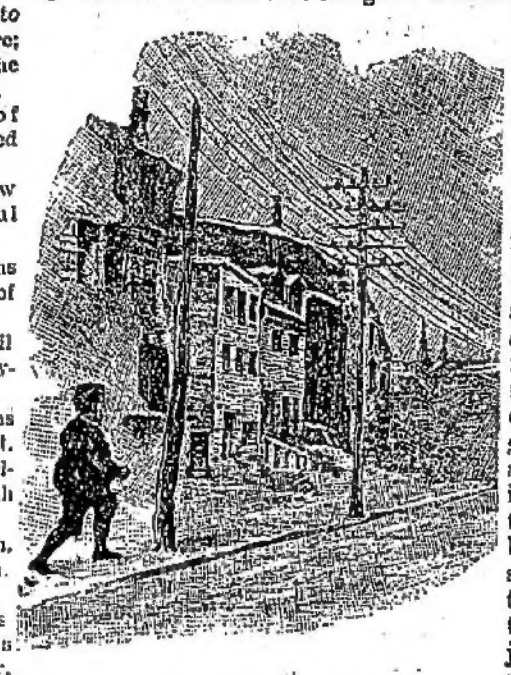
A story, my child! Well, there's none that I know
As good as the story about little Joe.
He lived with his mother, just under the eaves
Of a tenement high, where the telegraph weaves
Its highway of wire, that everywhere goes,
And makes the night musical when the wind blows.
Their home had no father—the two were bereft
Of all but their appetites; those never left!
Joe's grew with his body—a day never passed
He spent not in hunger to make the food last;
And days when the mother so silently went
And stood by the windows—Joe knew what it meant.
They'd nothing for supper! The words were so sad
That somehow they drowned all the hunger he had.
And surely God's miracles never have ceased:
Joe's hunger grew less when his sorrows increased;
And often the poor have been nourished and fed
By the sorrows that live when desire is dead.
When the coal ran out in winter's worst storm,
The fire burnt the harder that kept their hearts warm.

Their windows revealed many wonderful sights;
Long acres of roofing and high-flying kites.
At sunset, the great vault of heaven aglow,
The lining of gold on the clouds hanging low,
The cross on the top of St. Mary's high tower
Ablaze with the light of that magical hour;
And still, as the arrows of light slanted higher,
The last thing in sight was the great cross of fire.
Each day, as it vanished, the history old
Of Christ's crucifixion was reverently told;
To him the boy learned to confide all his woes,
But oftenest prayed for a new suit of clothes.
Since those that he wore didn't fit him at all—
The coat was too large and the trousers too small,
And Joe looked so queer, from his head to his feet
It grieved his proud soul to be seen in the street,
And sometimes he cherished a secret desire
To own a hand-sled, or to build a bonfire;
But reached one conclusion by various routes—
He could have better fun with a new pair of boots.
He thought how the old pair, when shiny and whole,
Had squeaked in a way that delighted his soul,
And remembrance grew sad as he strutted around
And tried hard, but vainly, to waken that sound.
The day before Christmas brought trouble to Joe,
A thousand times worse! 'Twas a terrible blow
To hear that old Santa Claus, god of his dreams,
Would not come that year with his fleet-footed teams.
He'd seen them! Why, once, of a night's witching hour
He saw them jump over the cross on the tower,
And scamper away o'er the snow-covered roofs
His heart beating time to the sound of their hoofs.
Not coming this year? Santa Claus must be dead,
He thought, as with sad tears he crept into bed.
And, as he lay thinking, the long strings of wire
Sang low in the wind like a deep sounding lyre,
And Joe caught the notes of this solemn refrain—
"*He'll not come again! no, he'll not come again!*"
And oh, how the depths of his spirit were stirred
By thoughts that were born of the music he heard;

How cold were the winds! and they sang, in their strife,
Of storms yet to come in the winters of life.
They mocked him, but mark how the faith of the child
Stood firm as a fortress, its hope undefiled:
For still the boy thought that, if Santa Claus knew
How great were *their needs*, and their comforts how few,
He would come; and at length, when the first rays of light
Had fathomed the infinite depths of the night,
And brightened the windows, Joe cautiously crept
Out of bed; and he dressed while his mother still slept,
And down the long stair ways on tiptoe he ran:
Then out in the snow with the will of a man,
He went, looking hither and thither, because,
Poor boy! he was trying to find Santa Claus,

He hurried along through the snow-burdened street
As if the good angels were guiding his feet;
And as the sun rose in the heavens apace,
A radiance fell on his uplifted face
That came from the cross gleaming far overhead—
A symbol of hope for the living and dead.

A moment he looked at the great house of prayer,
Then *shyly peeped in to* see what was there;
And entering softly he wandered at will
Through pathways of velvet, deserted and still,
And saw the light glow on a wonderful scene
Of ivy-twined columns and arches of green,
And back of the rail where the clergyman knelt,
He sat on the cushions to see how they felt.
How soft was that velvet he stroked with his hand!
But when he lay down, oh, the feeling was grand!
And while he was musing the walls seemed to sway,
And slowly the windows went moving away.
What, ho! there he comes! with his big pack and all,
Down the sunbeams that slope from the high-windowed wall;
And Joe tried to speak, but could not, if he died,
When Santa *Claus came and sat down by his side.*
"A tenement boy! humph! he probably swears."
(Joe trembled, and tried hard to think of his prayers.)
He lifted Joe's eyelids, he patted his brow,
And said, "He is not a bad boy, anyhow."
But hark! there is music; a deep swelling sound
Is sweeping on high as if heavenward bound.



And suddenly waking, Joe saw kneeling there
The rector, long-robed, who was reading a prayer.
"Provide for the fatherless children," said he,
"The widowed, the helpless, the bond and the free."
The rector stops praying—his face wears a frown:
A ragged young gamin is pulling his gown.
"I knowed you would come," said the boy, half in fright—
"I knowed you would come—I was watchin' all night.
Say! what are ye goin't' give me an' me?
Le'me see what 'tis, Santa Claus—please le'me see!"
The rector looked down into Joe's honest face,
And a great wave of feeling swept over the place;
And tenderly laying his hand on Joe's head,
He turned to the people and solemnly said:
"We pray that the poor may be sheltered and fed,
And we leave it to Heaven to furnish the bread,
Ye know, while he feedeth the fowls of the air,
The children of mankind he leaves to man's care;"
And kissing Joe's face the preacher said then,
"Of such is the kingdom of heaven—amen!"
That day Santa Claus came to many a door
He'd forgotten to call at the evening before.
Was little Joe happy? Well, now, you are right,
And the wires sang merrily all the next night.
—*Cosmopolitan.*

PAYING THE PREACHER.

A colored church with 200 members held a society meeting to consider the question of finances, which greatly troubled them. They had the free use of the church building, and some white friends paid for fuel and light; so all they had to raise was enough to pay the preacher.

The meeting was under charge of a thoughtful white brother, who let them get just as happy as they could from 8 o'clock until 10, and they had a Hallelujah time. Feeling ran high, shouts of glory rang out, and everything was heavenly. By and by he called them to order, and organized for business. The first thing after the opening prayers and other preliminaries, was the preacher's report. He reported $300 for the year's work. Everything was very quiet. The leader asked why they did not shout now? One old saint answered that he didn't see anything to shout about. For his part, he was ashamed to think they had shouted so well and paid so poorly. "But then," he said, we're all poor, you know." "Yes," answered the leader, "I know you are all poor. But you could do better than you have done, if you will go about it right. Do you want to do better?" Every one responded "Yes!" "Well," said he, "I'm going to show you how you can raise $2,500 this year."

The look of surprise and consternation on the faces of his audience was too much for the good brother's gravity, and he had to laugh. It was well that he did, for the congregation laughed too at his huge joke as they thought.

"But," he resumed, when they had recovered from the shock his statement had given them, "although I laughed, I am in dead earnest about it. You can raise $2,500, and you must raise $1,000 or quit professing religion when I am around." Then pointing with his forefinger to the leading brother, who could sing the longest shout the loudest, stamp the hardest, and jump the highest of any of them, he asked: "Brother John, how much do you spend a week for tobacco?" Brother John's jaw fell. But he pulled *himself together*, and managed to stammer, "I'll have to reckon." "All right," answered the leader, "I'll help you a little. Don't you think you average fifty cents a week?" Yes, he thought he did. The sisters liked the onslaught on tobacco; but he turned to their side of the house, and pleasantly inquired: "Sister Susan, how much do you spend a week for candy and sweet things, peanuts and other trifling notions?" Sister Susan was helped to say as much as fifty cents. "Now," said he, "I must show you that there is wasted in needless self-indulgence as much as twenty-five cents for each member, for you are all grown folks, and that makes just $60 a week, or more than $2,500 a year. You have only to deny yourself a paltry ten cents a week, each of you, to have $20 every week, or over $1,000 a year, and here you have been getting happy, and starving your preacher on $300 a year. Now what are you going to do? Keep on spending your money on foolishness, or bring it into God's treasury? It was a new thought to them, but, as the light shone, they consented to walk in it and begin that hour. So Brother John started and laid down his quarter, and Sister Susan laid down hers, and the rest followed, and so, paying and praising, the meeting went on gloriously, and that church learned a lesson that it never forgot. They found out how to do good. When they saw that they could, they gladly said that they would, and they did, and had plenty of money in the treasury after that memorable meeting.

Let young Christians settle the matter with God and their own hearts how much they owe to Christ and their poorer brethren, and then let them appoint a treasurer who shall receive the money saved from needless self-indulgence. This money will soon accumulate, and form a fund of such dimensions that buildings for Christian work can be erected in the crowded parts of the city, and great good would come to many. Let some such system be adopted at once. So shall God be glorified and your souls abundantly blessed.

Twenty-five dollars will start a Sunday-school in the West. Ten children, giving one cent per day for one year, amounts to $36.50, thereby being able to start a school with a surplus for extra books of $11.50. —*Buds and Blossoms.*

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh, they brought the new-born Christ—
The wise men from the East—and in the ox's stall,
The far-brought precious gifts they heaped, with love unpriced;
And Christ the babe looked on and wondered not at all.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh, I, too, would offer Thee
O, King of faithful hearts, upon thy Christmas Day;
And, poor and little worth although the offering be,
Because Thou art so kind, I dare to think I may.

I bring the Gold of Faith, which, through the centuries long,
Still seeks the Holy Child and worships at his feet;
And owns him for its Lord, with gladness deep and strong,
And joins the angel choir, singing in chorus sweet.

The frankincense I bear is worship which can rise,
Like perfume floating up higher and higher still,
Till on the wings of prayer it finds the far blue skies
And falls, as falls the dew, to freshen heart and will.

And last I bring the myrrh, half-bitter and half-sweet,
Of my own selfish heart, through sacrifice made clean,
And break the vase and spill the oil upon Thy feet,
O, Lord of Christmas Day, as did the Magdalene.

Gold, frankincense and myrrh—'tis all I have to bring
To thee, O Holy Child, now throned in heaven's mid!
Because Thou art so kind, take the poor offering,
And let me go forth blessed, as once the Wise Men did.

It Is the greatest possible praise to be praised by a man who is himself deserving of praise.—*From the Latin*

THE HOUSEHOLD.

CHRISTMAS HINTS.

I have very vivid memories of certain Christmas days of my own childhood, which were spent in the country. I remember well how little money there was in our small purses, and how little opportunity to buy anything if we had had more. To make something out of nothing was the problem over which my brother and I racked our brains for weeks beforehand. Somehow I think we managed to get more fun and excitement out of our trifling gifts, than many children now-a-days with ten times the money at their command. I shall not tell you what we made and gave each other, because that was long ago, and you can do a great deal better now.

A handy boy with a turn for carpentering can be a blessing in more ways than one to his mother. As far as my experience goes, a crying want in most country houses, is a lack of shelves and closet room. You might make a nice shoe-box for the family living room, that with the help of your big sister could be transformed into a comfortable and ornamental ottoman. Take a soap box, or a larger box if you have it, take the cover off neatly, and if it is in several pieces join them by two narrow strips on the upper side. Fasten the cover on with a pair of stout hinges. Tack a lining neatly on the inside of the whole box, cover and all. This lining may be of calico, perfectly dark, or of paper or muslin. Now take a piece of denim, which is the goods known as "overall stuff," cut it in the same width as the height of the box and tack it all round the four sides, in pockets, each one large enough to hold the pair of shoes for which it was intended. The strip should be hemmed top and bottom, and the dividing line between the pockets may be a piece of pinked leather, or a narrow bit of the denim folded double. It need not be all in one piece; indeed, small pieces just the size of a pocket are just as well. This arrangement of pockets will prevent a heterogeneous mass of shoes being plunged into the box, which would be very injurious to the nicer ones. The centre can hold a few pairs of half-worn shoes, and you can tack straps and a pocket or two on the inside of the lid for holding blacking and brushes. Now you will have to turn the ottoman over to your sister to upholster, either in cretonne, chintz, denim or the best breadth of some old woollen dress. Either of the latter might be embroidered with heavy linen thread, outlining some pretty design for the top and front. Fasten castors at the four corners and you will have a pretty and useful piece of furniture, which will give your mother satisfaction when many a Christmas has come and gone.

I have had in my parlor for many years Christmas gift made for me by my son, when a lad of fourteen. It is a bookcase, made of two upright boards ten inches wide and four feet high. There are five shelves, each ten inches wide. The two lower ones are twelve inches apart; the three upper, eight inches. These are fastened in with screws through the uprights, and the heads hidden with putty before the case was painted. Only the outsides of the uprights and the upper sides of the three lower shelves need be planed, but both upper and lower sides of the two upper ones will require planing. A can of ready mixed cherry stain will give it a beautiful finish, with the addition of a coat of varnish, and if you can get the china gloss paint, it will need no varnish. This is just as useful and almost as handsome as if you had paid fifteen dollars for it.

Sisters can surprise and delight their brothers with pretty little adornments for their rooms. A cozy room, showing the thoughtful love of mother and sister, is a very humanizing influence in a boy's life. If you want the boys to stay at home, make them love it. A bureau scarf, a splasher and a cover for the little light stand that holds his books and lamp, will be appreciated. You can have nothing prettier or more durable than this same denim. It is besides very cheap. It is always best to wash and iron denim before using it for fancy work. Take a strip the width of the bureau and about twelve inches longer on either side. Make a neat hem an inch wide all round, and feather stitch it on the right side with terra cotta, old gold, or light blue Bagarren linen. On the ends outline a design of maple or oak leaves. Make little tassels two inches long of the heavy linen thread with which you embroidered it and sew them on the ends, an inch or two apart, for a fringe. For a round or square stand make the cover square, hemmed in like manner and with the leaves scattered over the surface; for an oblong stand, make it scarf shaped. The splasher will need no fringe.

Cigar boxes, which the village grocer will give you for the carrying away, can be made into handkerchief, neck-tie, glove and brush and comb boxes for brothers, sisters or cousins. Deodorize them by washing with a solution of copperas, which is perfectly odorless itself. If you can get it, line with bright colored China silk, glueing it neatly at the edges; but bright crinkled sheets of tissue paper will answer very well, and these you can buy at a stationer's for five cents the half dozen. Ten cents' worth of sachet powder will perfume half a dozen or more boxes. Put a layer of French wadding in the bottom of the box and sprinkle with a little of the powder before you put in the silk or paper lining. There are many ways of ornamenting the outsides—you may give two coats of China gloss paint, white, rosewood or ebony; if the former, put a band of gilt all around. This paint is sold in almost any large paint, or fancy dry-goods and furnishing store for fourteen cents a can, and the gilt comes in small bottles at twenty-five cents each. There are fancy brass headed nails or ornaments which sell for a few cents a hundred, and make a very ornamental box. They are to be driven in according to the taste of the maker, generally in some geometrical design, on the top, sides and front. For a lady's bureau they may be left unpainted and covered with silk, satin, plush, velvet, colored muslin, with white lace over, frilling the lace around the sides of the box.

A handsome scarf for the dinner or tea table will please mamma, and quite a little girl may make one. If you can buy them of white linen already stamped, so much the better, you have then simply to outline the design in wash-silk of old gold, or any color you choose. If you cannot get the scarf already stamped, buy a half yard of plain white table linen; the width of the linen will make the length of the scarf. Make a hem an inch wide all round, feather stitching with silk, or hem stitching, if you know how. Mark on the ends a pattern of crescent, full and half moons about two inches in diameter, with straight lines crossing them irregularly, and outline this with silk. A handsome crochet edge, two inches wide, will give a nice finish to the ends, otherwise you had better fringe them.—*Poultry Monthly.*

CHRISTMAS RECIPES.

TEMPERANCE MINCE MEAT.—Two lbs. currants, 2 lbs. raisins, 1 lb. almonds, 1 lb. figs, chopped fine; ½ lb. each of lemon, orange and citron peel, 3 lbs. Muscavado sugar, ¾ lb. suet, chopped very fine; ½ peck of nice, juicy apples, chopped very fine; 1 nutmeg grated, 2 tablespoonsful of cinnamon, 1 tablespoonful cloves, a tablespoonful allspice, 1 dessert spoonful ginger, 1 lb. of nice beef chopped very fine, outside rind of 3 oranges and 3 lemons grated off the fruit; peel off and throw away the tough inside rind of these, and chop fine the body of the lemons and oranges. Put all together into a preserving kettle and simmer (not boil) one hour. Put away in a cool place in jars. This recipe has fully satisfied my total abstinence scruples in the matter of mince-meat, and has quite silenced lady friends who have doubted the possibility of mince-meat keeping, unless with the aid of cider or other intoxicants. Kept in a very cool place, I have no doubt as to its keeping perfectly sweet for even twelve months.—*Mrs. J. J. Rice, in "Witness" Home.*

ROAST TURKEY.—Select a large, fat, tender turkey, and have it nicely dressed, drawn, washed, wiped dry and well singed. Rub it all over, inside and outside, with pepper and salt. Make a stuffing of the following ingredients. One pound of light bread-crumbs, half a pound of butter, a heaping tablespoonful of finely minced onion, salt and pepper, one raw egg and enough water to mix rather soft. Stuff the breast first, and sew it up, then stuff the body. Rub the turkey all over with melted butter, and dredge well with sifted flour. Lay it in the pan on its breast, and pour in a quart of cold water. Have the oven well heated but not too hot, as the turkey must cook slowly to be done. Allow a quarter of an hour to each pound. Have some butter in a plate with a larding mop. From time to time baste the turkey with the gravy in the pan, rub over with the larding mop and dredge again with flour. As it browns turn from side to side and last of all brown the breast. Frequent basting, dredging and turning, will insure perfect cooking. When done it should be a rich, dark brown all over and when a fork is stuck deep into it no red juice should run. Remove it to a hot dish and if the gravy is not quite thick enough add a teaspoonful of flour creamed smooth with some of the grease skimmed from the gravy. If while cooking the gravy in the pan boils away too much, more water should be added. When the turkey is done there should be about a pint of gravy.

STEWED CRANBERRIES.—Wash and drain one quart of cranberries; add one pint of cold water, cover closely and set to boil for ten minutes, then add one pint of granulated sugar, and stew for ten minutes longer, keeping them covered all the time. Cook in porcelain, and stir with a wooden spoon to preserve the color of the berries.

HOLIDAY SWEETS.

VANILLA CREAM CANDY.

Put a pound and a half of white sugar, with three gills of water in a porcelain lined candy kettle. Boil rapidly, until when dropped in water it will form a soft ball, add a teaspoonful of extract of vanilla, grease a tin pan, pour in the candy, and set on ice to cool as rapidly as possible, pull until very white. Draw out in flat sticks, lay on a dry tin or flat dish for a few hours, when it will become creamy, and put away in close covered pans or boxes.

LEMON STICK CANDY.

Boil one and a half pounds of granulated sugar with three gills of water, add half a teaspoonful of cream of tartar dissolved in a little warm water. Keep covered and boil over a brisk fire until the syrup threads and cracks. Flavor with lemon, and color with grated lemon peel. Pour out to cool in a well buttered dish, as soon as cool enough to handle, take up and pull. Cut in sticks, roll until round, and set aside to harden. Pretty fancy sticks may be made by separating the candy and coloring each portion differently, pulling and twisting together.

CREAM BONBONS.

Put one pound of the best crushed sugar with a teacup of water in a porcelain candy kettle, boil without stirring, until a soft ball may be formed of the mixture. Remove from the fire, and let stand in the kettle a few minutes; flavor, and with a large spoon, beat until it becomes fine and creamy. With the fingers, roll portions of the cream into little round or ovals balls. These little bonbons can be dipped in melted chocolate, cocoanut cream, or small candied fruits may be may be pressed into their centre.

MOLASSES CANDY.

Boil one quart of sugar house molasses over a clear fire until brittle. Dissolve half a teaspoonful of soda in a little hot water and stir in. Flavor with cinnamon bark. Pour out to cool. When cold enough to handle pull until light. Draw out in sticks.

LEMON TAFFY.

Put one pound of yellow sugar and two cups of water in a candy kettle, let boil five minutes, and add two ounces of butter, boil until it hardens, but not until brittle, flavor with lemon, pour in well buttered tins. When nearly cold mark off with a knife in squares, press nearly through. When cold turn out on buttered paper, and break the squares apart.

PEANUT CANDY.

Boil one cup of sugar with a cup of water, add a pinch of cream of tatar. Let the syrup boil until it hardens. Butter the side and bottom of a bread, shallow tin pan, and spread chopped peanuts evenly around it. Carefully spread the boiling syrup over the nuts, and set aside. When stiff, cut in bars with a sharp knife. Let stand a day or two and it will become soft and delicious.

CHOCOLATE CREAM CANDY.

Boil one and a half pounds of white sugar with two small cups of water, and a salt spoonful of cream of tartar dissolved in a little warm water. Let boil until thick. Flavor with vanilla. Remove from the fire and let cool slightly before pouring out. With a wooden spoon, stir and beat until it begins to look milky. Then stir in six ounces of grated chocolate, mix well. Pour in shallow, wide tins, covered with well greased white paper. When it is cold, lift out the paper and cut in small squares or sticks.

MAPLE SUGAR CANDY.

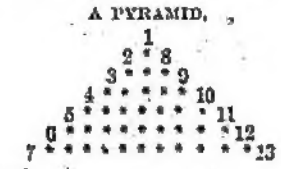
Boil one pound of pure maple sugar, and half a pound of granulated sugar with two teacups of water, add half a teaspoonful of cream of tartar, dissolved. Let boil until it hardens, then pour in a buttered dish. When nearly cool, pull until it is light colored. Make in little cakes, stick a whole walnut meat in the centre.

FRUIT GLACE.

Boil one pint of granulated sugar, and one cup of water, until brittle. Have oranges peeled and divided in quarters. Carefully dip each piece in a portion of the syrup, and set in a cool place to dry. Do not stir the syrup. Pineapples, bananas, or other fruits can be prepared in the same way, and, mixed with the oranges in a glass bowl, form a very handsome dish for a Christmas or a New Year's party.—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

PUZZLES—No. 24.

A PYRAMID.

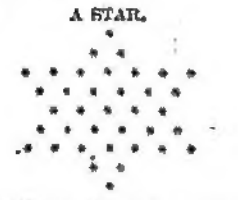


1. A vowel.
2 to 8. A chariot.
3 to 9. Relating to the end or purpose.
4 to 10. To run forcibly out.
5 to 11. A sort of mixed metal or alloy.
6 to 12. One who institutes.
7 to 13. Rebuilt.
Primals—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, one of the pleasantest seasons in the year.
Finals—1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, a pleasant place in which to spend that season.

BIOGRAPHICAL ANAGRAM.

Paul Missoliri Bruigvu was born Oct. 15, 70 B.C., at Tamuna, Layti. He became the most renowned ipee topo of quinytiat. His most noted works are Clongese, Crogisog, and greatest of all the Dicne. His extreme modesty caused him upon his death bed to desire that this last should be burned because of its imperfect state. But it was saved from destruction, probably by command of Suastugu. One of his Clongese is connected with Lonwheela, and may be read in the translation by Nydred.

A STAR.



(This star reads across, and from right to left.)
1. A letter from Portland.
2. A loft.
2. The name of a Polish officer, who died on Oct. 11, 1799.
4. The foot, or base, as of a pillar.
5. To bound.
6. A pack of hounds, or dogs.
7. A whole number.
8. A French article.
9. A letter from Portland.

AMERICAN CHARADE.

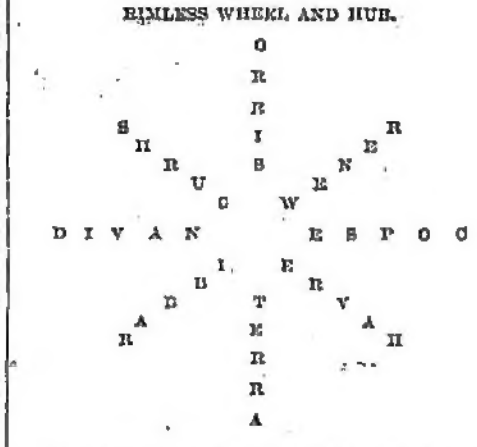
Our soldier-patriot, brave and true
The second of my first well knew.
And used my first with jealous care
Which of my second showed full share,
My whole was wont to throw at pleasure
My first into harmonious measure.

ANSWER TO PUZZLES No 23.

SQUARE WORD.

A C R E
C L A D
R A I D
E D D Y

RIMLESS WHEEL AND HUB.



Perimeter—Orchards. The Hub—Sweeping.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—

GarneT, EnougH, OctroI, RubbeR, GranD, EraIO, BlufF, ArmandO, NautiC, ChanT, RotundO OrlI, FlamE, TraitoR.—George Bancroft, Third of October.

BIOGRAPHICAL ANAGRAM.

Dutchman, Ghernard, Rotterdam, Latin, Greek, Desiderius Erasmus, desired, beloved, amiable, monastery, dispensation, Reformation, Protestantism, books, clothing.

RECIPES.

GINGERBREAD PUDDING.—Three and one-half cups flour, one-half cup butter, one and one-half cups sweet milk, one cup molasses, one teaspoon soda. Steam three hours.

MUTTON BROTH.—A mutton broth for immediate use can be made as follows: Have some chops cut from the best part of the neck of mutton, very thin, removing all the skin and fat. Put them in a saucepan, with the proper amount of water, some crusts of bread, a little sliced onion, and cover closely, cooking half an hour, or longer if possible. A little parsley can be added, if pleasing to the patient.

MARMALADE PUDDING.—One cup of fine bread crumbs, one-half cup sugar, one cup milk, four eggs, one cup of orange or any other marmalade; beat the eggs until light, add sugar, milk, and bread crumbs; pour a layer of this in a buttered dish, and spread a layer of marmalade on this, another layer of the mixture and then the marmalade again, and so on till the dish is full, having the mixture on top. Bake about one hour; serve with hot sauce.

TAPIOCA CUSTARD. — Five dessert spoons tapioca, one quart milk, one pint cold water, three eggs, three heaping cups sugar, pinch salt; stir until boiling: add gradually to the beaten yolks and sugar; boil again (always in a vessel set within another of hot water) stirring constantly; cook until thick, but not too long as the custard will break—five minutes after it reaches boiling will suffice; pour into a bowl and stir gently into the mixture the whites beaten to a stiff froth. Flavor and set aside in a glass dish till cold.

THE HERMIT.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Far, far removed from all the haunts of men,
Within a desert place, or rocky glen
As one might term it,
Unharmed by human blame or human praise,
There dwelt in distant half-forgotten days
A saintly hermit.

With rapt devotion did his spirit burn,
Each prayerful day was followed in its turn
By prayerful morrows;
He heeded not, in his exalted life,
The sordid cares of men, their paltry strife,
Their sins and sorrows.

One Christmas-Eve as he his vigil kept,
Whilst Nature 'neath her snowy mantle slept,
He saw with wonder,
An angel standing smiling by his side,
Whilst heav'n to hosts seraphic opened wide
And burst asunder.

In silent awe the hermit bowed his head.
"Fear not, my son," the angel sweetly said,
In accents ringing,
"Our Christmas carol strive to learn by heart,
And see if thou art fit to take thy part
In heaven's singing."

"Glory to God!" bright hosts of seraphs sang,
"Glory to God!" the highest heavens rang,
"To God be glory!"
"Oh, angel!" cried the hermit, growing bold,
"This can I sing, for all my life has told
The self-same story."

The angel smiled; "And art thou then as fair
To sing the second part of heaven's strain?
With tones sonorous
The white-robed carol-singers chanted then,
"Peace on the earth, and good will unto men!"
So ran the chorus.

In tearful shame the hermit bowed his head:
"I cannot learn the angels' song," he said.
"Nor sing it duly;
To God great glory I have ever given,
But men I have not taught the way to heaven,
Nor loved them truly."

The angel answered, "Brother, grieve not so!
Two things compose man's duty here below—
Thou hast the one done;
In this thou hast not been of grace bereft,
Yet none the less thou shouldest not have left
The other undone.

"Be comforted! it is not yet too late;
No'er closed to those who knock is heaven's gate:
Now learn thy duty—
Love well thy fellow-creatures, and ere long
Thou'lt learn to sing the sweet seraphic song
In all its beauty."

The hermit straightway left his lonely glen,
And lived and worked amongst his fellow-men
Like holy leaven;
At last—the carol learnt—he ceased to roam,
And then the angels bore him safely home
To sing in heaven.

—*Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler.*

A CHRISTMAS SNOW FLAKE.

"ONLY A GIRL."

HOPE DARING.

"Don't you think it must have been glorious, auntie?"

It was a warm July afternoon, and Myrtle, my fifteen year old niece, and myself were sitting in the shade of a huge oak tree that stood on the summit of a hill that overlooked a cosy farm house, Myrtle's home. She had been reading aloud to me a tale of the knight-errants of King Arthur's time, and the story, all new to her, had drawn the question from her.

I had not been listening very attentively, and looked up to find Myrtle stretched full length on the grass, supporting her chin on her brown hands and gazing down upon the river than flowed lazily along between fields of grass and grain, which were beginning to show touches of gold.

I was about to reply to her question when, "Auntie!"

"Yes, dear, what is it?"

"I wish I was a man! There, you need not laugh. I know I wish it once a day, but truly, I do wish I had been a man and lived in the days of chivalry. Oh, auntie! you don't know what it is to be 'only a girl' to all the family, and they all boys."

"You are getting somewhat excited," I replied as I stooped and kissed her; "I, too, am 'only a girl', or woman, rather, and I am content to be so, as it is God's will."

"Yes, auntie, a trifle more meekly, "but if I could only do something that would be something. I have wanted to tell you all about it and now I have a good opportunity. The boys' work is all planned for them: Hal is to enter uncle's bank when he leaves college, Verne has gained consent, at last, to become an engineer, Fred is to stay with papa on the farm, and even little Charlie, three years younger than I, is to be a merchant if he continues to show an aptitude for trade. I went to papa one day and asked him what I was to be, telling him I either wanted to be a teacher or fit myself for giving music lessons; and, auntie, he laughed, trotted me on his knee, and said, 'Study what the mother says, but remember you are to be a home girl always; there will be work enough for you without going out into the world.' Mamma says the same, and told me last week. 'One hour a day is practice enough, as you can take lessons years if you wish to, and I want you to have time for other things.' Oh, auntie! I love them all, but must I always just wash the dishes, dust the parlor, play for the boys to sing, and be 'only a girl?' I might as well be a doll for all the real good it is. Why cannot I have a place in the world as well as the boys and do real work, work that will help others?"

I did not laughed at her. Dear little Myrtle—she had been petted and then ignored in the family plans, and her ambitious little brain was awakening to the fact that her future contained only luxurious ease.

"Myrtle," I said, bending so I could look into the frank blue eyes, "the work we are to do is not for us to choose, but what a kind and loving father sees is for our good, is given us."

"Don't think," she said quickly, "I am looking for a great future. I know I have no great talents, but surely I can do something. I can be a teacher like you and do good and help others that way. Think, auntie, I have no chance to work for God, and truly, I do want to do if only a little for his sake."

"I believe you, darling, but 'no chance,' did you say? Believe me, you have now a duty to do and can do the work of no other. If it is to comfort and care for your parents, could you ask for a nobler task? Only be sure the little duties of to-day are well done. There are foes for you to meet as well as for Sir Galahad. One of these is the very unrest and discontent that is filling your heart now; another is the temper that blazes forth sometimes when the boys tease you. I am speaking plainly, dear, but you wanted me to tell you what I thought, did you not?"

"Yes, please go on."

"Myrtle, you told me once you prayed and hoped for the conversion of Verne and Fred. We are all praying for it, dear, but may not the life of the sister so dear to these boys, be the means of leading them to the Saviour she follows? Your trouble is, your are looking for some great deed to do for the master and neglecting the little tasks he gives you. Think, my child, could you give a work requiring ability, faith and ready obedience to one who showed no willingness to attend to the affairs of less importance?"

"Oh, auntie, I never thought of that! Do you suppose he really notices how we do our work and such things?"

"Each act of our lives meets God's approval if done to the best of our ability. Myrtle, be content in your home nest, and do not think there is no work there for you. Make yourself the light and joy of yonder farm house, and if in the future our father see that it is best the place in the world be given you, believe me, it will be yours; and if not, my precious little girl, 'the well done' will be as sweet as if glorious deeds, not homely duties, had earned that praise."

Her arms were around my neck. "Thank you a thousand times; I never thought of it in that way. Auntie, it has"—and the sweet young voice dropped reverently—"it has brought God so much nearer me, and I will try from this time to do my work as 'unto him.'"—*Michigan Advocate.*

A STORY FROM INDIA.

From all parts of the vast empire of India come hopeful tidings. The circulation of the Scriptures in this land has been very great; and the special work of the Bible-women appears to have been abundantly fruitful. One incident supplied by a missionary will illustrate what the Word of God is doing far and near throughout India:—

Some time ago I was in one of the large towns in our district. In the evening after a hard day's work I sat down by the cart to rest, when three men came up to me, one of them falling prostrate at my feet after slipping a rupee into my hand. I raised him up gently and inquired what he wanted. From his conversation I gleaned the following story. Eleven years ago a blacksmith in his village had bought a copy of the New Testament from some gentleman who was passing through. I could not learn who it was, and he and his farmer and another farmer had been reading it all these years. Six years ago the Brahmans became so enraged that he was held down forcibly and made to drink water a Brahman had dipped his toe in. In all this time they had never met with a Christian. When I went through this part of the district two years ago he saw some of the books I had sold to others, and this day he met some one who had seen me and bought books, and he had dropped his work and hurried in without delay, reaching me, as I have said, late that evening. His talk was a constant surprise to me. He seemed to know the New Testament thoroughly, compared the Pharisees to the Brahmans, and was very familiar with Paul's Epistles. I went to his village the next morning, and they were very joyful and entertained us, saying our coming had given them great support. He bought a first book to learn to read. His knowledge of the Scriptures was the more remarkable as he had only heard it read by the others. When they brought out the worn book carefully wrapped in a cloth I touched it with a feeling of reverence. They purchased two more copies and other books. I hope to visit them again in a few weeks. God grant that it may be the nucleus of a Church formed there.

NOT ENOUGH.

Some men reject Christianity because they say that the light of nature is sufficient. Have the fire-worshippers of India, cutting themselves with lancets until the blood spurts at every pore, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Bornesian cannibal, gnawing the roasted flesh from human bones, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Chinese women, with her foot cramped and deformed into a cow's hoof, found the light of nature sufficient? Could the ancients see heaven from the heights of Ida or Olympus? No! I call upon the pagodas of superstition, the Brahminic tortures, the infanticide of the Ganges, the bloody wheels of the Juggernaut, to prove that the light of nature is not sufficient.—*Talmage.*

NEVER KNEW AN EXCEPTION.

I have no faith in a religion made up of equal parts of wormwood, vinegar, and red pepper. If the religion that is presented to us be a depression, we will get along better without it. If it be a joy, let it shine out from your face, and from your conversation. If a man comes to my house to talk of religion with lugubrious countenance, and manner full of sniffle and dolorousness, I feel like saying to my wife: "You had better lock up the silver before they steal something." I have found it an invariable rule that men who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, priding themselves at the same time on their sanctimoniousness, always turn our badly. I never knew an exception.—*Talmage.*

"See what Santa Claus has brought me!"

HOW THE CHILDREN KEPT CHRISTMAS.

Mamma Todd was down in the kitchen busily engaged in making cookies for Christmas, and the four little Toddies, as they called themselves, were very busy watching her, smacking their lips in anticipation over the plum-pudding, and longing for the time to come, when, like little Jack Horner, they could "put in their thumb and pull out a plum" from the big fruit cake.

Ethel, as she was the oldest, was promoted to the dignity of being mamma's assistant, and just now, half eclipsed by a big gingham apron, with her sleeves rolled up above her dimpled elbows, she was the very picture of a little housekeeper.

The egg-beater flew swiftly under the nimble fingers till the white foam grew firm and smooth.

"There, those eggs are beaten enough, aren't they, mamma?" she asked, turning the dish upside down to the great alarm of the other little Toddies, who always expected to see the egg fall on the floor, holding their breaths until the dish was restored to its normal condition.

"Yes, dear, that will do, nicely," answered mamma, "now you may pick over these currants for me."

"Oh, mamma, isn't there something that I can do?" asked Harry, watching Ethel with envious eyes.

"Me, too!" chimed in May, eagerly.

"Bertie wants to help. Let Bertie help," cried the little four-year-old pet of the house.

Mamma laughed.

"'Too many cooks spoil the broth,' you know," she answered. "But since you are so anxious to help I will try to find something for you to do in a minute. Now 'open your mouth and shut your eyes and I'll give you something to make you wise,'" and she popped a plump raisin into each of the wide open mouths.

"That tastes like Christmas. Mamma I think everything tastes so much better at Christmas than at any other time," said Harry.

"I wish Christmas came two or three times a year," said May. "We always have such lovely times. I don't know which I like best, hanging up our stockings or the Christmas tree, they are both such fun."

"I wonder if everbody has as nice a time as we do," said Ethel, thoughtfully.

"I am afraid there are a great many little children who don't know anything about Christmas happiness," mamma answered. "I know one family of children that don't expect to have any Christmas presents, or even enough to eat of very plain food."

"Why, mamma, who are they?" asked Ethel, in surprise.

"You have all seen the little girl about May's age, who comes around with a basket every day, begging for something to eat. Yesterday, when she came to the door she looked so cold that I told her to come in and sit down by the fire a little while, and get warm. I saw that her eyes were red and swollen, as if she had been crying, and after a while she told me that her mother was sick, and she was afraid she was going to die. I gave her something to take home with her, and in the afternoon I went around to see her."

"Where does she live?" asked Harry.

"She lives in a little tumble-down house by the bridge," answered mamma. "I found her mother, who is very sick, lying on a bed made of old clothes, near the fire, and the little children huddled around her, trying to warm themselves by the feeble blaze of a few sticks which smouldered in the fireplace. She has been sick for a long time now, she told me, and had to sell all her furniture, piece by piece, and at last when it was all gone, Maggie had to take a basket and go out to beg for enough to keep them from starving. I don't think those little children are *looking forward to* Christmas as eagerly as you are."

"How dreadful it must be to be so poor," exclaimed May, her bright face saddened at the thought of suffering.

"Mamma, didn't you do something to make them more comfortable?"

"I did all that I could," answered mamma, "and I think the poor woman is more comfortable now. I thought of a plan as I came home, though, which may give the children a happy Christmas for the first time perhaps in their lives. Children, why do you enjoy Christmas so much?"

"Because we get so many presents," answered Harry, wondering why mamma asked them such a strange question.

"Because we have a beautiful Christmas tree and so many goodies," May, said with a loving glance at the row of pies on the table.

"'Cause Santa Claus comes," put in Bertie, eagerly.

"Yes; I think your great pleasure has been in receiving presents," answered mamma. "Now I have been wondering if you wouldn't enjoy a Christmas equally well if you found your pleasure in giving instead."

"Why, mamma, what do you mean?" asked Harry, in bewilderment. "Not get any presents at all?"

"I thought that perhaps you would enjoy giving these poor little children presents more than receiving them yourselves. Papa and I talked it over last night, and he told me just what presents he meant to get each of you, and said that if you would rather have the money instead, and spend it on this poor family, he would be very glad to give it to you."

Four bright little faces lengthened slowly out, and nobody said anything for a few moments. They were all generous, warm-hearted children, but it seemed like a very hard thing to give up their presents to make some children, only one of whom they had ever seen, happy instead.

"Wouldn't we have a tree or any presents or anything?" asked Harry, sadly.

"Don't look so heart-broken about it, dear," said mamma, cheerily, smiling at his long face. "You can do just as you like about it, you know. You can have your presents and tree, just as you usually do, if you want to."

"Which would you do if you were in our places, mamma?" asked May.

"I don't want to advise you, dear," answered mamma. "I want to leave it entirely to yourselves. Now, Harry, here is something you can do, if you want to help," and she put a chopping-bowl before him.

Harry worked in silence for a while, then he looked up with a brighter face.

"Well, mamma, I will give up my presents if the rest will," he said, bravely. "I shouldn't enjoy them half as much, anyway, since you told us about those poor children. It would just spoil everything for me to remember them."

"I will give up mine too," said May, with sudden resolution.

"And so will I," added Ethel.

"See here, Bertie," she went on, catching her little sister up in her arms, "wouldn't you be willing to have Santa Claus go to see a poor little girl who hasn't *got any Christmas*, instead of coming to see you?"

"No! No! Me want Santa Claus to come and fill my 'tocking," answered Bertie, shaking her head wilfully.

"Oh, mamma, she is too little to understand," said Ethel. "What shall we do with her? Don't you want to be a generous little girl, Bertie darling?"

But Bertie kept on shaking her golden head.

"Me want Santa Claus," was all Ethel could induce her to say.

"Well, we will have to get along without her share then," said Ethel. "Now, mamma, won't you please tell us how much money we will have to spend for Christmas."

"Papa said that he had intended to spend about twenty-five dollars on your presents, and if you decided to give them up you could have that amount to spend."

"Twenty-five dollars!" exclaimed Ethel. "We can get lots of things with that, can't we, mamma. Let's get some paper and a pencil, Harry, and make out a list of what we are got to get. What have they got now, mamma?"

"Nothing at all, dear, except a few old dishes and a bed I sent them yesterday."

The four heads bent over the paper, Bertie interested because the others were, all talking eagerly.

Mamma smiled quietly to herself as she heard some of the items proposed.

"A cook-stove, put that down, Harry," May exclaimed.

"They want a bed-room set, too," said Harry, with the air of having suggested an invaluable idea.

"Guess you don't know how much bed-room sets cost," said May. "It would take more than all the money we have got to buy that."

"Would it?" said Harry, in surprise. "well, we can leave that out, I suppose."

The children filled up both sides of the paper with a list of things that they considered absolutely indispensable to the poor woman's comfort, and Harry was about to go upstairs for another sheet when mamma suggested that twenty-five dollars wouldn't buy everything that they could think of, and that they would therefore have to leave out a great many of the things that they had thought of.

The next two days were very busy ones to the three older children. They made a great many errands to the sick woman's house, laden with little dainties from mamma, that they might see what things were really the most necessary, and I think they were far happier in looking forward to her surprise and pleasure than they would have been in looking forward to a beautiful tree and presents for themselves.

The day before Christmas the children were up almost at day-break so anxious were they to carry out their plans. A neighbor of the poor woman's, whom they had let into their secret, promised to bring both the mother and children over to her house early in the afternoon and keep them till evening, so they would have a chance to prepare their surprise.

The morning seemed very long to the eager children, and they could scarcely restrain their impatience.

After they once got fairly at work it was wonderful to see how they changed the appearance of everything.

If they had been fairies the changes they made could hardly have been greater.

Ethel swept the floor neatly, and then Harry put down a large square of warm carpet, faded, it is true, and mended in one or two places, but still very comfortable. Then he put up an old stove which Aunt Jennie had found in her lumber-room and given him.

May had fastened a curtain at the win-

dow and already there was an air of comfort in the room that had seemed so bare and cheerless.

Then how they enjoyed dressing the little Christmas tree. They intended that these poor little ones should, for once, have a real Christmas.

Harry fastened the tree firmly in a barrel of coal which papa had given him, and then they festooned it with strings of popcorn which they had made themselves.

They hung apples, oranges, and tinsel covered nuts on it, and a sweet-faced doll smiled down from the top of the tree.

The children had looked through their stock of toys and found that they could spare a great many of them to beautify the tree, and as they hung the *last gift* on the heavily-laden boughs, and stepped back to view the result of their labors, they were more than delighted.

"Won't they be pleased, though," said *Harry, enthusiastically.* "I *say, girls,* I had a great deal rather have this kind of a Christmas than the kind we generally have, wouldn't you?"

"This is a great deal more fun," said May, warmly, while Ethel added:

"And then the best part of this Christmas is, that we make somebody happy beside ourselves. The children will enjoy this tree just as much as we did fixing it for them. Now let's hurry and finish fixing things, so they can come home soon. I want to see them when they come in and see the tree."

"How differently everything looks, *doesn't it?" said May,* with a last glance into the cupboard, where, on the neatly papered shelves, were all kinds of good things.

"I think they will enjoy sleeping in a warm bed after lying on the floor," remarked Harry, looking at the low, broad bed with its warm blankets.

"Now, you girls light the candles, while I go and get all the folks," he exclaimed, darting away.

I don't know who was the happier when he returned a few minutes later, the sick woman and her children, who were delighted and surprised beyond measure at the change in their home, or the children who saw their happiness.

One thing I know, that the children did not for an instant regret that they had given up their own pleasure to make others happy.

At bed-time they missed the fun of hanging up their stockings as usual, but the remembrance of the children's delight over the tree more than counter-balanced any feeling of disappointment they might have felt.

They helped Bertie to hang up her stocking, and then went to bed to dream of Christmas trees and Santa Claus.

The patter of Bertie's little bare feet as *she ran across the nursery floor to get* her stocking awoke them the next morning, and they gathered around her to watch her empty it.

"See what Santa Claus has brought me!" she cried in delight, drawing out its contents. "Candy, and a dolly, and lots of things. You poor chillens, was you so bad Santa *Claus wouldn't bring you nothing?*"

The children laughed.

"It is because we were so good that we didn't get anything, Bertie," said Harry.

Bertie shook her golden head wisely.

"I know better'n that," she replied. "Don't mamma tell me if I isn't good Santa Claus won't bring me anything? You was all very bad so he didn't bring you anything. You can have a piece of candy," she added, generously, putting a piece in her own rosy mouth as she spoke.

"I have one present for you," said mamma, as they came down to breakfast, and she pointed to a beautiful illuminated text that hung on the wall.

"Oh, thank you, mamma," they exclaimed together.

"'It is more blessed to give than to receive,'" read Ethel, slowly.

"Oh, mamma, I know why you chose that verse for us! It's true, too, isn't it?" she added, turning to May and Harry.

"Yes, indeed," said Harry, warmly, while May said, quietly.

"Mamma, I would rather have every Christmas like this, than have all the presents in the world for myself."—*Selected.*

THY WILL BE DONE.

BY MINNIE E. KENNEY.

"Marjorie, you are just the one we were waiting for. Come here, and tell us how to arrange these flowers!"

"No, Marjorie, tell us first where these banners ought to go!"

"Marjorie, do look here."

The young girl who had just entered the church where a number of her friends were busily at work, preparing the decorations for a missionary anniversary, paused a moment in the doorway, as she heard her name spoken so many times.

"Where shall I go first?" she asked, with a smile. "I'll be there in just a moment, Bertha," she added, as another and still more *importunate voice arose from* the corner of the church; then she moved about from one group to another, making a suggestion here, giving a graceful droop to a festoon there, and with her deft hands and good taste finding herself in great demand.

"What would we do without Majorie Harrison," the young people in the church often said, and in truth it seemed as if she was quite indispensable in every thing that went on in the church. She was a born leader, and she was so unobtrusive and gentle in her leadership, and her suggestions were always so sensible, that every one was willing to yield to her.

Strange to say it had not spoiled her, and there was not the least trace of self-conceit or pride in her manner. Perhaps the secret of this was that from her childhood her heart had been her Saviour's and she had so earnestly endeavored to consecrate every talent and gift to his service that there was not room for much of self love to obtrude itself.

At last the church was ready for the evening's exercises, and gathering up the remnants of evergreens strewn around, the young people started homeward.

Marjorie Harrison was the last to leave the church, and in her haste to join a companion who was waiting for her at the foot of the steps, she slipped on the icy stones and fell heavily, striking her back against the sharp edges of the steps.

A cry of pain escaped her as she tried to rise, and she fell back again with a white face.

Her companions gathered around her, and loving hands lifted her and carried her back into the church, while a carriage was sent for.

"I shall soon be all right," Majorie said, smiling faintly at her anxious mother, when she was carried into the house, but as day after day went by, and still she was held a helpless prisoner, she realized that her injury was more serious than she had imagined it could be.

"When shall I be able to walk again?" she asked the doctor at last, and as gently as he could, the old man who had known her from babyhood, told her that it was probable that she would never be able to move about again, that she must reconcile herself to the thought of spending months and years on the couch where the weeks had dragged themselves away so wearily.

At first the young girl's heart was full of passionate rebellion, but at last, when the first violence of her emotion had spent itself, she relapsed into a state of sullen apathy that grieved her mother even more than her first resistance.

"I am of no use in the world now," she said bitterly one day, when her mother was trying to comfort her. "What is the use of living when I will only be a helpless burden?"

"Tell me, darling," her mother said gently, "what is the hardest part to bear of your trouble; is it your suffering or your fancied inactivity?"

"The pain is hard enough," Marjorie answered gloomily, "but I could bear that if only I could keep on with my work. I meant to do so much for the Lord, and be such a useful Christian, and here I must lie with idle hands when there is so much to do in the world."

"But, darling, if this is the way he wants you to work for him, are you not willing to do it, even if you would rather carry out the plans you had made for yourself?" asked her mother tenderly. "Perhaps he has work for you to do that you could never accomplish if you had your health and strength. It may be that you can win more souls for Christ by patient, uncomplaining submission to your Father's will, than you could by any amount of active service. Can you not say 'Thy will be done,' even if it is not your will, dearest?"

Marjorie's face grew brighter.

"If I can still work for him, I can bear the pain," she answered gently. "I have been thinking that there was not anything for me to do, because I had to give up all the work I had delighted in, but I will try to serve with folded hands since it is his will."

It was a hard lesson to learn, and sometimes when she remembered the brightness and activity of her former life she was tempted to repine, but she schooled herself to say "Thy will be done," and in time she had the joy of knowing that she could still serve the Master with folded hands, and could win souls to him by patience and submission to his will.—*Christian Intelligencer.*

A STARRY LOZENGE.

There are few observers who can view unmoved the glorious picture presented by the starlit sky on winter evenings, and few who do not wish to call by name the twinkling mysteries that people the boundless depths of space. An excellent way to impress upon the memory the name and position of the brighfest stars is by the method of forming geometrical figures that shall include them.

The most superb combination of stars the heavens reveal may be favorably seen on the evenings of the latter part of January.

It takes the form of an irregular lozenge or diamond. It includes that magnificent constellation of the winter sky, the group of Orion. The brilliancy of the stars, the conspicuous belt and sword, and the surpassingly beautiful telescopic objects it contains cause it to rank first among all the constellations that stud the firmament.

Its leading brilliant is Betelguese of the first magnitude, lying above the three stars that form the belt, while the first magnitude star below the belt is Rigel.

The centre of this constellation is on the meridian about nine o'clock on January 23rd, and no better time can be found for studying its features. Before that day of the month it will be farther east, and afterwards farther west.

If the line of the belt be extended upward to the right, a star of the first magnitude will be seen. It is Aldebaran, the leading star in Taurus. If the line of the belt be extended downward to the left, the glittering Sirius will come into view, a star that far exceeds in size and brilliancy every other star in the heavens.

We have now the starry points that form the lozenge, Sirius, Aldebaran, Betelguese and Rigel. The belt of Orion is in the centre, and the whole constellation is included within its limits, while the celestial combination is so impressive that once seen it cannot be forgotten.

Its equal may be looked for in vain, as it includes four first magnitude stars and five second magnitude stars. If the observer once traces the figure and learns the shining gems by name, the lesson is learned for a lifetime, for at just the same season of the year the same stars will hold the same position in the heavens, the combination remaining unchanged.

The peerless Sirius, the bright Betelguese, the ruddy Aldebaran, and Rigel with its paler glow, will include the superb Orion, with its grand array of telescopic curiosities, crowned by that mysterious wonder of the skies, the far-reaching Great Nebula.—*Youth's Companion.*

WHAT SAVED HIM.

One Christmas morning, many years ago, a young reporter on a daily paper had occasion to call with a message at the office of one of the foremost editors and publishers of the country.

The younger man was a sickly country lad of keen sensibility and nervous temperament, who, finding himself homeless and friendless in a great city, had yielded to temptation, and had fallen into the habit of drinking and gambling. The publisher, as he listened to the message, noted the lines which dissipation had already left on the boy's face. He was a man who made it his work in the world to help others. No man touched his hand in passing who did not gain from him new courage and hope in life.

He answered the message which the reporter brought, and then, holding out his hand cordially, said, "Let me wish you a Merry Christmas, my lad." He took from a shelf a book, containing sketches of the lives of the greatest English, French and German authors, with extracts from their works.

"Here," said he, "are some friends for the new year. When you spend an hour with them you will have noble company."

The surprise of the gift and the unexpected kindness from the man whom he regarded with awe had a powerful effect upon the lad. He spent all his leisure time in poring over the book. It kindled his latent scholarly tastes. He saved his money to buy the complete works first of this author, and then of that; he worked harder to earn more money to buy them. After a few years he began to gather together and to study rare and curious books, and to write short papers upon obscure literary subjects.

Men of similar tastes sought him out; he numbered some of the foremost scholars and thinkers of the country among his friends, but he never forgot the lonely friendless lad who had been sinking into a gambler and a drunkard until a kind hand drew him back, and he in his turn sought out other lonely, friendless boys in the great city, and gave them a helpful hand out of the gulf.

So, year by year, his life widened and deepened into a strong current, from which many drew comfort and help.

He died a few years ago. The sale of his library gathered all the collectors of rare books in the sea-board cities. During his illness, the newspapers spoke of him with a sudden appreciation of the worth which had so long been hid in obscurity.

"A profound scholar with the heart of a child;" "A journalist who never wrote a word to subserve a base end," they said. He read those eulogies with a quiet smile.

One day he put into the hands of a friend an old dingy volume. "When I am gone," he said, "take this to Mr. ——, and tell him that whatever of good or usefulness there had been in my life I owe to him, and this Christmas gift of his thirty years years ago."

The little story is absolutely true. We venture to tell it because there is no one living whom it can hurt, while there are many whom it may help to hold out friendly hands to their brothers who have stumbled into darker paths in life.—*Exchange.*

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Listen; the bells in the steeples
In jubilant gladness ring
To welcome the coming of Christmas
And the birthday of the King
Who was born in the lowly manger of Bethlehem, long ago,
When the song of the herald angels
Was sung to the world below.

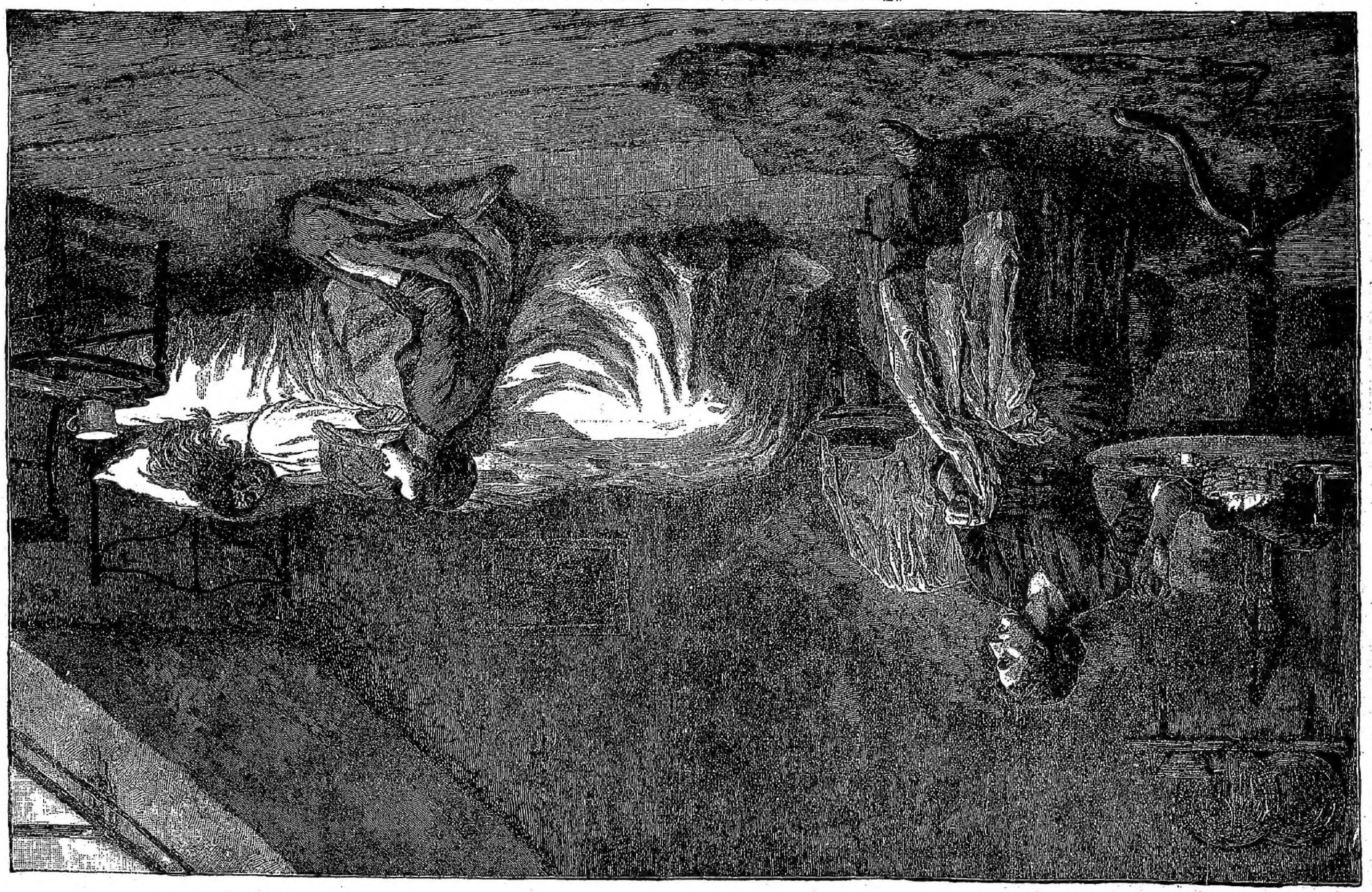
Thou hast clad thyself in raiment
Of spotless white, O earth,
Like a bride on her marriage morning,
To celebrate Christ's birth.
O, were our lives as spotless,
Our hands unstained with sin,
And the latch of each heart were lifted
To let the Christ-Child in,

Bring of thy pine and holly,
O earth, this Christmas Day,
And wreathe in their green the altar
Whereon our gifts we lay;
Gifts of most grateful homage
Laid low at the feet of the King
Who leans from his throne to listen
To the sound of our worshipping.

Bring to the dear Lord's altar
The soul's white flowers to-day.
Let the rose of thy love shed incense
Sweet as the breath of May.
Let the lily of faith eternal
Lift its cups of myrrh to him
Whose love is the star that leads us
Through ways that are dark and dim.

O earth, send back to heaven
The grand and the glorious strain
That startled the wondering shepherds
On far Judea's plain.
Glory to God in the highest,—
Sing it again and again.—
On earth be peace, on earth be peace,
Good will, good will to men.

—*Eben E. Rexford, in Ladies' Home Journal.*



"The careworn woman who hath known that saddening dream called 'Better Days.'"

A STORY OF SANTA CLAUS.

'Twas Christmas Eve; the snow fell down
In whirling eddies, borne around,
Blown hither, thither, on the ground,
Above, all o'er the festive town.
With glee the rich man's children cried,
"Oh, welcome snow! glad sport in store!"
And watched the snow-storm from the door;
"Hard winter!" many a poor heart sighed.

The children's hearts beat gay and light;
Gathered around the Christmas tree,
Or on a parent's loving knee;
For Santa Claus would come to-night!
And dainty hands with loving care
'Mid prattling of each childish tongue
O'er downy pillows stockings hung,
That Santa Claus might find them there.

Oh, light and shade! The artist hand
Must mingle tints of every hue
To paint a picture stern and true
Then turn to sorrow's haunt thy gaze!
A dim light o'er a garret thrown,
A care-worn woman, who hath known
That saddening dream called "better days."

Dragged down to drink-caused woes by him
Whose vows of love her youth beguiled;
A drunkard's wife, a drunkard's child
Are doomed to want and penury grim.
This night the mother's heart was wrung;
She saw, by dim light, faintly shed,
Oh, grief! beside her darling's bed
A little empty stocking hung!

And she had naught to fill it left!
No little toy, for childish treat;
No golden orange, juicy, sweet,
By him for drink, of all bereft!
She slept that night, 'twas misery's sleep,
Till Christmas carols, sweet and clear,
Broke in the morning on her ear;
Then she awoke to sigh and weep.

Her mother-heart gave one wild throb,
She heard her darling's fingers grope
Around the cot, in childish hope—
Then came a silence, and a sob!
It spoke of childish hopes all crushed,
Of an awakening from a dream
Bright with an almost fairy gleam,
It told of joy's song, rudely hushed!

Much grief the mother's heart had known,
Hunger and cold and untold woe;
But ne'er such anguish did she know
As wrung her heart that Christmas morn!
And this she felt grief's greatest sting;
Whate'er life's miseries, or its woes,
None are so fierce, so dire as those,
Man on his fellow-man doth bring!

Oh, loving-mother! tender wife,
Whose hand upholds the wine-cup red,
Yet seest no cause for future dread,
Know this—that wine with woe is rife!
He drank and fell, and thou dost blame;
Hath not the cup the selfsame sting?
When thou thy stone at him doth fling,
Remember! Thine may do the same!

—*Harriet A. Glazebrook.*

ANECDOTES BY MR. JOSIAH NIX.

The following extracts are from a speech by Mr. Nix of the London Wesleyan Mission, at the Annual Meeting of the National Temperance League, held at Exeter Hall, on May 8:

GOOSE CLUB NEW RELIGION.

"The place where I work mostly is in Wardour Hall, in Soho. We had not been there many weeks before the publican put out a very large bill stating, 'Our annual goose club has commenced.' I thought 'What is that for? That must be to get the working man's money; and if the publican can get the working man's money with a goose club, why should not the teetotalers?' I had a large bill printed at once—one a little better looking than the publican's—and I put it up announcing that our annual goose club would commence on a certain day. I made inquiries in the neighborhood of a man who knew all about it. In nine weeks the people in that slum paid into my hands no less a sum than £93 18s. Most of that money would have gone into the publican's till, but it came into the hands of temperance reformers; and, instead of handing the people back their money, because I thought that perhaps they might then spend it in drink, I said, 'We will spend the money for you. If you will come on a certain night, and give your orders for whatever you want, we will purchase the things for you.' We purchased 1,324 articles, and the purchases gave satisfaction. The publicans became angry; they were very much annoyed. They said: 'This is a new religion.' The old religion I found they had profound respect for—the religion of going to church once a week. They seemed to admire that very much, but this new religion of a goose club—they could not understand it, and they made up their minds that they must do something if they wished to keep level with the new religion."

COLD WATER FROM A PUBLICAN.

"One Sunday, two or three weeks after Christmas, instead of going into the streets, I said, 'We will go into such and such a court.' Of course I found a public-house, opposite which we took our stand, and I gave out a hymn. The publican came out and said, 'You must move off.' 'No, thank you,' I replied, 'we will stand still.' 'But,' he said, 'you must move.' I replied, 'We are not going to move; we will go on with our singing.' He went to fetch a policeman, and the policeman came and said 'I must trouble you for your name and address.' I asked, 'What for?' 'This gentleman wants it,' he replied. I said, 'Who is this gentleman?' 'He is the proprietor of that public house.' I said, 'Will he prosecute me?' 'Oh, yes!' was the reply. 'Very well then, here is my name and address.' But he did not prosecute us for it. The following Sunday we went again. The publican said, 'If you do not go I shall have to take the law into my own hands; I will go upstairs and throw some water on you.' Of course we did not move, and the publican went upstairs—he to one window and his wife to another—and when we were busy preaching, singing, and exhorting the people to sign the pledge and to become Christians, down came the water. That was a grand day for us. I believe in cold water. A group of little children were standing round, and they had not several changes of clothes. They had only the one lot, and the dear children were saturated to the skin with the publican's water, and they ran home crying, and down came their mothers. Well, it was a grand sight to every one of us. We had no need to fight any more; these women did the fighting—and those who could not fight with their fists fought with their tongues, and I will tell you what they said. 'We will never come into your house (the publican's) any more. We have spent our money at your house and this is the way you are serving us in return—we will never come in again.' And here let me say that that public house is closed to-day."

A STOCKBROKER'S SACRIFICE.

"Some few months ago I went into a suburb of London to conduct the services for the day. I was asked to the home of a gentleman, a member of the Stock Exchange, and himself, his wife and myself were dining together. A bottle of stout was put on the table for the lady, a bottle of Bass's ale for the gentleman, and a small decanter of water for myself. They rather apologised for having the drink on the table. I said, 'Do not apologize. Let me tell you this—there is one sacrifice which is acceptable to God rising from this dinner-table. I like a glass of stout or a glass of bitter quite as well as you do; but is my appetite to rule, or am I to rule it? Is my appetite to rule all the action of my life, or am I to rule myself?' I said. 'My usefulness, my influence very much depends upon my being a total abstainer, and if I wish to be a thoroughgoing servant of God, so that I can put my arm round the poor drunkard and lift him up, I must be a total abstainer. Therefore, I say, 'Go appetite, and come power of God, come power for service"—that is the sacrifice that is rising up here to God.' After the dinner was over the gentleman said, 'I have never looked at the question from that stand point; I will make the sacrifice.' 'Very well,' I said, 'but call your wife first.' I always like to consult the ladies. The lady came downstairs, and after we had talked it over, they both signed the pledge in my Bible. As we were walking along to the evening service, I said to my friend, 'Christ is never in our debt; you never make a sacrifice for Him but what He pays you for it at the first opportunity. Keep your eyes open, and watch for some great blessing from God.' At the service that very night—he had been praying for the conversion of his wife for many years—his wife rose in the congregation and signified her intention of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ. She walked down before all the congregation, followed by fifteen other women, and there commenced in that chapel a revival of religion. That man had never prayed or spoken in public, but the moment he saw his wife march down the aisle of the chapel, he uttered praise to God from that night. He is now a local preacher; he started a temperance society, and they have over a hundred members in it at this moment, and he himself is the president. He started also a Band of Hope."

A TRADESMAN'S SON IN RAGS.

"After I had formerly signed the pledge at Oxford, one of the members of the Oxford University came and rang my bell, and asked me if I would go and see a man who was a drunkard. I had gone to bed but I got up and accompanied this young man. I went into a very small room and there, sitting on a broken chair, was a man in the depth of misery and poverty and sin. I looked at his wife, who was sitting on a bed of straw in a corner of the room with her children half-starved and poorly clad. I looked at the man, and saw in him the son of one of the leading tradesmen of that city, and I knew that within half a mile of that very room his father was living in luxury. I said to myself and I said to him, 'What has brought you down to this?' He replied, 'It is the drink;' and as I talked to him I found out what an awful curse this drink had proved to him and to his wife, and to his family. I took out the pledge book and we knelt together at the throne of grace, and that night that man and woman signed the temperance pledge. As I left the room to go into my own house, I thanked God that I had signed the temperance pledge."

AN OXONIAN LUNATIC BY DRINK.

"Two or three days after that a tradesman living very near to me—a man who had recently married a beautiful woman, and a large fortune had come into his hands—was at the Epsom races, and had won a lot of money at the Derby. All the day long he had been going to and from the drinking place, and I said to him, 'You had better leave off drinking, my friend, or I am afraid it may bring you into trouble.' He said, 'You mind your own business.' I replied, 'That is my business. My business is to get you to sign the pledge.' He paid no heed, but went again to the drinking place. I saw him afterwards and begged him to sign the temperance pledge, and he was on the point of striking me. I again urged him, but he refused. He got up into his trap, but would not allow his man to drive him; and as he was going down High Street, Oxford, he came into collision with a doctor's carriage. He was thrown out, and he is in a lunatic asylum at this moment. Then my eyes began to be opened. I saw what an awful thing the liquor traffic was, and I found within me a fire had been kindled—a fire of hate to this abominable traffic, and it is burning more brightly to-day than ever."—*Christian Herald.*

A CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SEXTON.

Dr. Hamlin, of Washington, in an address at the St. Louis meeting, told the following story:—

A prayer-meeting was being held in a rural church that was weak and growing weaker by the removal of members and by death; and there was a young man in it who had recently found the Saviour, and he was full of love and zeal. He made a little address; it was a warm-hearted and earnest talk; and at the close of it he quoted those words: "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand; I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," and sat down. They sang the hymn, "All my doubts I give to Jesus;" and he joined most heartily in the singing. When they reached the last verse, beginning, "All I am I give to Jesus," something in him said, "Do you mean that?" "Why, yes," he said, "I mean it." And then he began to think: "Do I mean it? Am I in earnest about it? Would I be willing to be anything and do anything for Christ's sake?" The hymn ceased. Then the committee of the church began to make a report upon the finances of the church. They were falling behind. They had made every effort to raise every dollar they could, and they had succeeded in getting enough for the ensuing year except money to pay the sexton. The sexton had just moved away. They needed seventy-five dollars; nothing less would pay for a sexton, and a gloom fell upon all the congregation. This young man had been saying, "In my heart do I mean it?" Then he arose and told the people what had been passing in his thoughts. He said, "I did not mean it; I found that I did not; but, thank God, now I do mean it, and I will be your sexton for the next year." They accepted the offer, and without pay he did the work. It was better work than they had ever had done for pay, but he had a hard time of it; for if there is one man that gets more kicks and cuffs than the minister, it is the sexton. Everybody finds fault with him. But through the year he persevered. He had not sung quite so loud as he had been singing; he did not testify quite as glibly as he had been testifying; but he was able to say, "Yes, I did mean it. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Christian Endeavorers, exercise yourselves thus, and you will grow strong in the Lord unto perfect manhood and womanhood.

THE ROUNDSMAN'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

So you're a writer, and you think I could
Tell you some story of the Christmas time—
Something that happened to myself, which you,
Having the rhyming knack, might put in rhyme?

Well, you are right. But of the yarns I mind
The most are best untold, they are so sad;
My beat's the shadiest in town you know,
Amongst the very poor and very bad.

And yet from one of its worst places, where
Thieves gather who go round with murd'rous knives,
A blessing came one Christmas day that brought
My wife and me the sunshine of our lives.

The night before, I had at last run down
Lame Jim, the captain of a river gang,
Who never had been caught, although his deeds
Were such that he deserved for them to hang.

And as he sprang upon the dock I sprang
Like lightning after him, and in a trice
Fell through a trap door, and went sliding down
Upon a plank as slippery as ice.

I drew my pistol as I did, and when
I struck the earth again, "Hands up!" I cried;
"I've got you now," and at the same time flashed
The light of a dark lantern every side.

I'd landed in a big square room, but no
Lame Jim nor any other rough was there;
But from some blankets spread upon the floor
A child looked up at me with wond'ring stare—

A little girl, with eyes that shone like stars,
A sweet, pale face, and curly, golden head.
"Why did you come so fast? You woke me up,
And scared me too," in lisping words she said.

"And now I am not scared for I know you.
You're Santa Claus. My stocking's on the wall.
I wish you merry Christmas. Where's my toys?
I hope you've brought a lovely cup and ball."

I never was so taken 'back, I vow;
And while I speechless stood, Jim got away.
"Who are you, pretty one?" at last I asked.
"I? Don't you know? Why, I am little May.

"My mother died the other night, and went
To heaven; and Jim, my father, brought me here.
It isn't a nice place: I'm 'fraid of it,
For everything's so lonely and so queer.

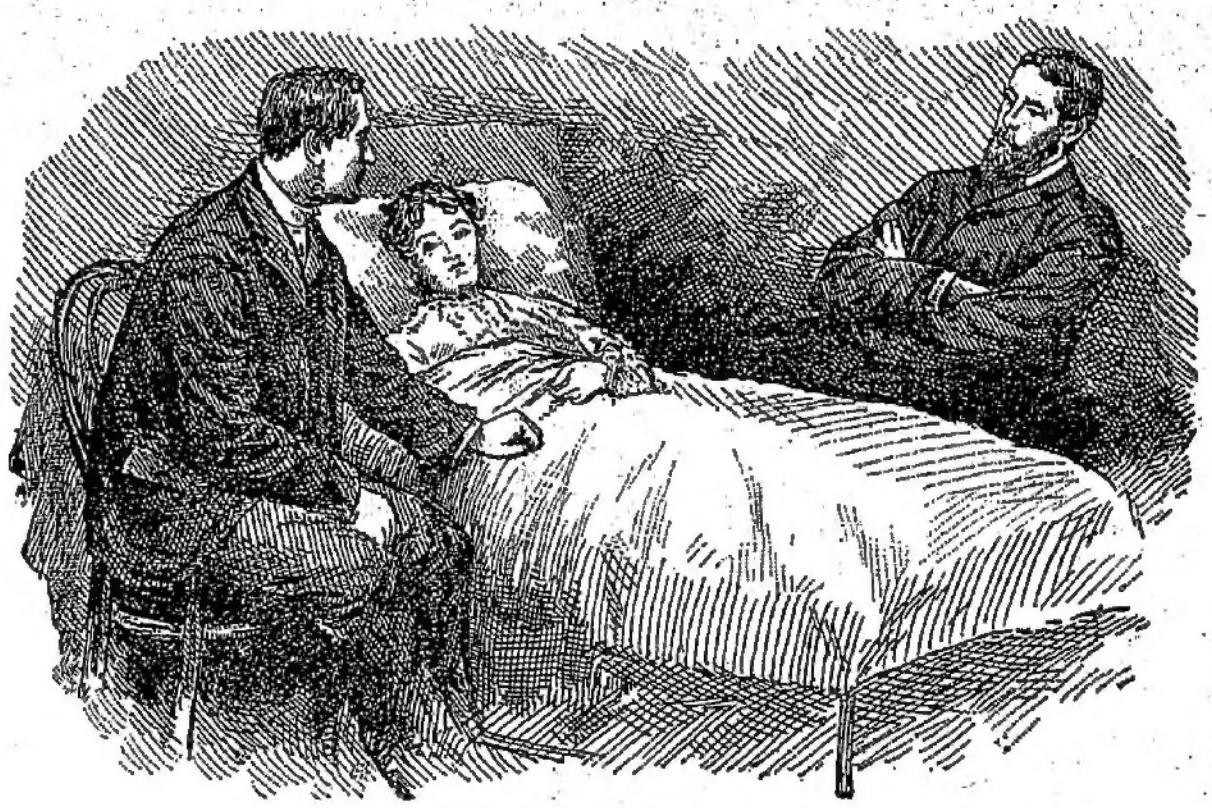
'But I remembered it was Christmas-eve,
And hoped you'd find me, though I thought because
There was no chimney you might not. But oh!
I'm glad you did, dear Mr. Santa Claus."

Well, Captain Jim escaped—the law, I mean,
But not a higher power: he was drowned.
And on his body near his heart, poor wretch,
The picture of his baby girl was found,

And that dear baby girl went home with me,
And never was a gift more precious given;
For childless had that home been many years,
And so she seemed sent to it straight from heaven.

God's ways are wonderful. From rankest soil
There often grows a flower sweet and bright.
But I must go, my time is nearly up.
A merry Christmas to you, and good-night.

—*Anon.*



"They often met at the child's bedside."

THE LITTLE SISTER.

(By Margaret Vandegrift in Harper's Young People.)

A few of the more fastidious of Jack Sterling's friends accused him of wearing his heart on his sleeve; but if he did, it could stand the exposure to public view better than most hearts, for it was as sound as it was light. Perhaps the manner of his life had helped to mould it. His earliest recollections were of delightful wanderings in the queer places of many foreign lands, with a mother and father who regarded him as the crowning joy of their free and joyous life, and made a companion of him before he had learned to speak any of the various languages which he afterwards acquired. Then came a long voyage; a night of storm and terror, darkness and cold, and cruel waves; and in the morning, when life returned to him, he was among utter strangers, in a strange land, and the passionately loved father and mother were seen no more. He was ten years old then—old enough to understand his loss, and also to use the bright courage which was part of his heritage. His father's last words came back to him like a trumpet call; the strong voice had rung out above the storm just before it was forever stilled: "Be brave, my little boy! God will keep us all!"

That had been the key-note of his life. Kindly people had cared for him; all his life he wondered at the kindness and love which met him wherever he went; he never guessed that it was a response. He was adopted by a well-educated, sensible farmer and his wife, and grew up on the little British island where he had been cast by the sea strong and tall, with an honest, blunt-featured face, beautified by its expression. A little sister grew up with him. She had been only a baby when these good hearts took him home, and she never felt the want of a brother's love. This love deepened, grew more loyal, more tender, as a hopeless deformity developed in the small suffering body. A fall had hurt her spine when she was only four years old, and she never grew taller than a well-grown child of ten years. Her face was very lovely, and, as her hands and feet were small, there was no grotesqueness in the dwarfed figure in the slightly humped back. And she was blessed with a sunny cheerfulness which triumphed over her pain.

Jack loved the home of his adoption, but there was a deep underlying love for the home of his birth; and when he found himself at twenty once more orphaned, and but for the idolized little sister alone in the world, his thoughts turned homeward. Indeed they had turned thither before, but all his resolutions to broach the subject had failed with the failing health of his best friends; he had not the heart to leave them, and it was evident that they could not come with him, as he had once hoped they might. But Alma was different; youth asserted itself in spite of pain and weakness, and she listened with eager interest as he unfolded his plan. He had first of all consulted a doctor as to the possibility of the move for her, and had been assured that in a drier climate, and with the opportunities for surgical treatment which a large city would afford, her health might greatly improve, although she could never be wholly cured. When he told her this, she was as eager to go as he was, and the matter was soon arranged.

The farm, including the house and stock, had been left to her for her life, to revert to Jack should he outlive her; the thousand pounds which had been saved and deposited in bank, to him. There was no difficulty in finding a good tenant for the farm, and the rent would amply support the little girl for some years to come. Jack had no fears for the future; he only wanted "a place to stand in." He had been eagerly reading and studying for some years past whatever books he could find upon the profession of a mining engineer, and he felt now that a few months of diligent and capably directed study would fit him for this profession, which somehow had taken hold of him as he wandered about the rocky caves of his island home. He hoped to find work which would at once enable him to pay his way, and to save his little capital; but if he could not, he must draw upon it, that was all.

And so they went to the New World, this fragile little maid of twelve, and the strong, hopeful youth of twenty, and after a few quiet, happy weeks in lodgings in New York, she accepted, with a courage and faith far beyond her years, the doctor's verdict concerning her disease, and went, with at least outward cheerfulness, to the small private room in the great hospital where she was to spend months under the treatment which would, she was assured, enable her to "keep house for brother Jack." That was her ambition; to be able to move, ever so slowly and cautiously, about the small house they were one day to have; to see that all was sweet and pleasant; to do for him with her own hands some of the loving services which her mother had rendered to them all. She had never hoped for this at home, although she was forever dreaming of it, and now this great doctor, whose name was a power in the land, had given her this hope, and she joyfully believed him. Her fear of his piercing eyes and strong hands had soon been conquered by the great tenderness with which he treated her. She was not merely a "case" to him, and child as she was, she now understood this.

So the months passed; slowly but surely and steadily her health continued to improve. Jack found work that left him the chance for the needed study. His great physical strength stood him in good stead, and he spent his mornings lifting heavy bales and boxes and barrels in a big wholesale grocery, and still found himself able and alert for an afternoon and evening of study. The doctor who had charge of Alma was watching him. They often met at the child's bedside; she told her beloved physician from time to time the story of their lives, and all their hopes and plans; and he, with his many friends and acquaintances, and far-reaching interests outside his profession, had little difficulty, when Jack was qualified for the position, in obtaining him the offer of the superintendency of a Pennsylvania iron mine. The salary at first would not be large, but a good house for the superintendent was "thrown in," the region was a wholesome one physically, and the place less than a day's journey from Philadelphia.

"I see but one drawback," said the part owner of the mine with whom Jack had his interview. "You are, I fear, too young and untried for the situation; for although the force is not large, because the mine is a small one, the men employed are a reckless, rough sort of fellows, doing their work well enough, but needing a strong hand to keep them in order. I like all I have heard of you, Mr. Sterling, and I greatly hope you will succeed; but you must pardon me if I am unwilling to make a binding bargain for more than six months, although I hope sincerely that at the end of that time our engagement may be renewed for a longer term."

"You are quite right, sir," said Jack, frankly, after a moment of disappointed silence, and his face brightened once more as he spoke; "for you don't know how entirely I mean to succeed!"

The balance hung doubtfully for a few weeks, and Jack never liked to look back upon that time. The wrench of even a temporary parting with the little sister had been terrible for both, but worse for him than for her. By this time she was at home in her hospital; matron, nurses, doctors, convalescent patients, were her dear friends. She was allowed to read and study a little every day, and—oh, delightful mystery!—to set a few stitches daily in the two large fine cambric handkerchiefs which were to be hemmed and marked for Jack's Christmas present. And he was to come and spend a whole afternoon with her once in every month, until the joyful day when she should go to "keep house" for him. This day would be postponed, her doctor—her "best doctor," as she called the great surgeon—had told her, if she fretted; so she did not mean to fret, no, not for one moment!

It seemed to Jack for a while that he lived upon her letters and "only hopes." He was growing hard and stern to the small world about him, but he was succeeding in ruling it. He had tried kindness at first, to be met with open derision and insubordination. Then he had grown stern; his untiring vigilance gave the men no chance to hatch small conspiracies; he knocked down and sat upon a big bullying fellow who ventured upon open insolence; he dismissed two men for petty thieving from their fellows, two more for drunkenness, and another for "inciting to riot." Order was coming out of chaos; but a lowering sky seemed to hang over the place; the men were sullen, and always on the verge of revolt. And Jack's heart was terribly heavy. How could he ever bring the little sister to a place like this? The cottage overlooked a row of workmen's houses, and sounds of quarrelling or roars of laughter even more unpleasant marred the silence of the evenings.

She would feel the unkindly atmosphere, as a delicate flower feels a biting wind, and yet what could he do? He was re-engaged now at a higher salary; the situation had possibilities of still farther advancement, and if he should give it up, months might elapse before he could make a fresh start. No, he must stay, and he must change the conditions. But how?

II.

It was Monday morning, and Jack was in his office bright and early. He had brought a small parcel in his hand; it was his most cherished possession—a very lovely tinted photograph of the little sister, prettily framed. This he hung above his desk, so that it would attract the notice of any one entering the room. Then he stood for a moment with his head upon the desk; he was praying as he had never prayed before. Then, as he heard the trooping feet of the men on their way to work, and the heavy tread of the foreman crossing the yard, he turned to the door with a bright and hopeful smile.

"Good morning, Mr. Mackenzie," said Jack, cheerfully. "Will you please tell the men I would like to speak with them for a moment before they begin work?"

This was nothing new. Jack had been obliged to read the riot act more than once on Monday morning because of uproarious conduct on Saturday night and Sunday; but Mackenzie wondered a little, for, so far as he knew, there had been nothing out of the common this time; the usual number of "simple drunks," and chastised wives and children, but nothing, from his point of view, really riotous. The men paused on their way, and turned into the office with sullen reluctance; indeed, a word from their leader in misrule would have decided them to disregard Mackenzie's roughly given order, "The boss wants ye all in the office before ye go down;" but the leader's "drunk," although simple, had been very complete; and his head ached too badly this morning to leave him mind enough for anything beyond cursing and grumbling. So they stamped in, crowding the room unpleasantly, and scolding and cuffing at each other because of obtrusive elbows and feet.

"I have a few words to say to you, my men, that are not exactly on business," began Jack, standing up, tall and square-shouldered, against the whitewashed wall. "A good many of you have children, and so I hope you can understand how I love this little sister of mine, who is eight years younger than I am, and who for nearly all her little life has been suffering and almost helpless. But she is much better, thank God! She is in a great Hospital in New York; and although the doctor says she can never be quite well nor very strong, he thinks that if we are careful she may walk about and keep house for me—that's the thing she's trying for, bless her!—and that in another week or two I may bring her home. I've written her what a nice little home it is. I've told her about the garden, and how we can keep chickens and a cow, as we did in our home across the sea; for though I was born in this country, I was shipwrecked, and cast on a British island when I was only a little lad, and the mother and father of this, my dear adopted sister, took me in, and filled, so far as they could, the place of the mother and father I had lost.

"They are dead, and my little sister and I are all in all to each other, for she was only two years old when I was taken into her home, and nothing could hurt her more than to say I am not her 'real brother,' although she knows my story well. She is eager to come, but oh, boys, how can I bring her? She's as tender and delicate as a flower, and how can I let her hear and see all that I daily hear and see, and how could I shield her, living so near? I have not the heart to tell her that perhaps, after all, she may not come. It would break her heart, I am afraid, for she has lived on this hope through all the long months in the hospital, and borne all the pain she had to bear because of it. Look at her! This is her likeness," and he held the angelic face high up that all might see. "I have nothing more to say. You know how it is. Think about it, and to-night, as you come from work, stop and tell me shall I bring her here."

There was a sort of roar from the men that startled him; then a big Irishman stepped forward, and said in a brogue which need not be attempted: "Sure we're not beasts, if we are black by times! We know an angel from heaven when we see one, and we're as able to be decent as any. And when a man speaks us civil and fair, as you're speaking now, sir, and not as if we were the dirt under his feet, we'll let him see he's made no mistake. Shall he bring her? he says. Tell him, then, boys, and speak out. Is it aye or no?"

(To be Continued.)

BISHOP HURST says that 8,000,000 Mexicans have never seen the Scriptures.

NEW VERSION OF AN OLD RHYME.

Sing a song of sixpence,
You fellow full of rye,
With not a cent to bury you
To-morrow if you die.

Bar-keeper's in the bar-room,
Counting out his money;
His wife is in the parlor
With well-dressed sis and sonny.

Your wife has gone out working,
And washing people's clothes,
To pay for old rye whiskey
To color up your nose.

THE LITTLE SISTER.

(By Margaret Vandegrift in Harper's Young People.)

(Concluded.)

He turned to the men; he was grinning now at his own wit; and as he turned, the "Aye!" was shouted out in tones of such hearty good-will that Jack tingled all over, and "the water stood in his eyes."

If he had asked for any pledge of good conduct, if he had said a word in detail about the behaviour of the men, who can tell what the result would have been? But his appeal, so simply made, leaving all to their honor, had gone home, and he had no farther fears. Jack went to New York the next week and brought Alma home. Mackenzie, by previous arrangement, met them at the station with a spring waggon, in which a mattress was spread, and the little sister, her great blue eyes shining with eager joy, could with difficulty be made to lie down for the short drive. She was wild to see everything. Mackenzie's wife, a good, motherly woman, had set the house in order for "the little lady," and her oldest daughter, a steady, neat young woman of twenty, was to do the house-work and wait upon Alma. All seemed to promise well.

But the journey, carefully as it had been managed, and the glad excitement of the home-coming had been too much for the fragile body, after the long period of tranquility at the hospital. All night she lay wide-awake, racked with pain, but uttering no sound, for she heard the regular breathing of Honor Mackenzie from the cot in the corner of her room, and she knew that Jack, too, was sleeping soundly, tired, because of his loving care for her and the early start he had made that morning, and she was unwilling to wake either of them. She could scarcely speak, when Honor, at six o'clock, stole softly to her bedside, fearful of disturbing her, yet anxious to know if she needed anything, and Honor, frightened by her white, drawn face, hastened to call Jack. It was not many minutes before he was in the saddle, riding for the nearest doctor, he spoke hurriedly to Mackenzie first, and the latter, as he led the men to work, turned about at the entrance of the mine, saying:

"The little lass is very bad. He's afraid he did wrong to fetch her, and he's away for the doctor. The trouble is heavy on him, lads—heavy! And if any of you have the heart to add a feather weight to it, ye're not the men I take ye for."

"Don't holler before you're hurt," growled the young fellow who stood nearest him. "*Who's going to?*"

And Mike Kelly, the big Irishman, added: "He's been dacent to us at long last, and we'll be dacent to him first and last, or there'll be broken heads to be mended before all's done!"

That this was no idle threat each one of the company felt sure.

For three days Jack went about with a white, hopeless face, giving his orders briefly, and spending every moment he could honestly spare from his work in the darkened room, where his treasure lay. Then color and hope came back, and he stopped the men on their way to work to say, joyfully: "She is better, boys! The doctor says she will pull through. And I can never thank you enough for the past three days; the place has been as quiet as a church, and I could not ask anything more as to the work."

There was a murmur of satisfaction, not loud, but deep, and the men passed on. And that night, after dark fell, one and another stole up to the back door, and waited eagerly for a chance to ask, "And how is the little lady by now?"

As she recovered, offerings began to come in—flowers and fruit from carefully tended scraps of garden, young chickens and birds, rabbits shot and snared by the boys in the hills near by, and one day a young opossum.

"He's prime eating, boss," said the proud donor of this gift. "I made this here cage for him, 'cause I thought it might kinder tickle the little lady to watch his tricks while you fatted him up. It must be dreadful tedious to stay in the house all the time."

Needless to say that that opossum had secured a permanent home, and the rare privilege of being "fatted" without being subsequently eaten.

As the child began to go about house and garden, there was a curious eagerness to see her upon the part not only of the men, but of their wives and children as well. They would come shyly toward the house two or three togtther, stopping at a safe distance, and watch for her face at window or door or gate. Jack was afraid this would annoy her, but it did not! it filled her with a tender interest for "his people," as she called them. There were private conferences with Honor; the much-thumbed book of recipes which had come from the English home was consulted; delicious odors of baking began to greet Jack when he came home to dinner, and then she proudly showed him the two great crocks filled with cookies and ginger cakes which she had mixed, and Honor had rolled and baked. A very few of these offered to the least shy of the children drew the rest to her, and Jack laughed many a time, with a sudden gush of tears to his eyes, as, passing to and fro, he saw "his angel's" face at the vine-wreathed window on the little porch, smiling down at the motley group gathered upon the steps and the grass. One day he heard her say, "The girl who has the really-cleanest face and hands and the nicest hair to-morrow, shall have something very pretty to keep."

And that night she showed him half a dozen rag dolls which she and Honor had been making; she had painted their faces and dressed them in gay calico, and her delight at his praise of them was great.

"You see, Brother Jack," she explained, "we are going to show them—Honor and I—how to make little clothes for their dolls; they will think that is just fun. And then, after a while, we will get them to sew for themselves. Have I money enough to get the stuff for nice little warm frocks and pinafores for the ones who are big enough to sew?"

"Yes indeed, darling," answered Jack; "and I'll buy you the stuff the very next time I go to Philadelphia; but you must be careful; I can't have you ill again."

And she promised to be careful—for him!

Winter came early to that wild place, and shut the little maid within warm rooms, but it did not shut out her "friends." Jack gave her one of the four rooms on the ground-floor of the house—the other three sufficed for their daily use—and with Honor's ready help she fitted it up fantastically with pictures and bright-colored chintz and gay fans; an open grate held a cheerful fire, and here, excepting on the days when pain once more took possession of her, she saw all comers. The room was considered a marvel of beauty by her visitors, who were not only children; the mothers began to come, humbly asking for advice and help with their winter sewing, and begging her to sing for them; for she had a voice sweet and clear as a lark's, and often sang to "her children" as she sat with them. Jack felt uneasy at first, when some of the better ones among the men, who had been kept under by the rougher element before, made excuse to come and "fetch home their women" in the dark evenings. They never stayed much after eight o'clock, and their behavior was painfully correct, and when he saw the pleasure that the little sister took in each and all of her visitors, he did not interfere; instead, he took advantage of one of his business trips to Philadelphia to buy a huge pile of old magazines from a circulating library, and was far more than repaid for his trouble by Alma's thanks and radiant delight.

By almost imperceptible degrees the rough settlement among the hills was growing orderly and peaceful. Those who preferred quietness and decency to tumult and misrule were no longer afraid to show their preference.

Christmas was drawing near, and Alma's whole mind and heart were absorbed in her project of "giving a Christmas" to all the women and children. She had been lost in loving pity when she learned that to many of them the word had no meaning, and, as opportunity offered, she had told the story of the first Christmas to "her children," and encouraged them to prepare little gifts for their parents and for each other. She told them, too, about the custom in her English home of twining evergreen wreaths to beautify churches and dwelling-houses, and into this plan they entered with a will. It never occurred to her innocent mind that the hum of glad preparation which began to go through the village had her for its chief object. But one had talked to another of this new thing, saying how "the little lady" would miss her Christmas, and so a conspiracy was formed.

The men and boys cut boughs and young trees of evergreens; the girls tied wreaths and long ropes of fragrant spruce and cedar. portions were taken from treasures laid by in the fall—nuts of various sorts, apples, persimmons, and tea-berries. The boys saved the wings of the few birds they happened to shoot; three of them joined forces and made a rug of rabbit-skins, and, little by little, the fathers and mothers were drawn in. One man shot a bear high up the mountain and brought home the meat, but would give no account of the skin; another, who was "handy" with tools, began, in the long winter evenings, to put together cunningly twisted roots and boughs for the legs and frame of a small table. A woman who knew how to "hook" rugs spent all her spare time and all the bits of colored flannel she could find upon a rug which excited the admiration and envy of her neighbors; another stuffed a little cushion with down from an unusual goose, and covered the cushion with a bit of bright tartan she had brought from "home." Honor, occupying a place so near the throne, and being well liked, was in every one's confidence; and so the night before Christmas, when Alma and Jack were sound asleep, she stole down-stairs and let the chief conspirators in. Noiselessly the man who was clever with tools put in a screw here and there, and hung the ropes of green in dining-room, parlor, and kitchen. A little cedar-tree stood in every corner, and heaped on a nicely tanned bear-skin in the middle of the parlor floor was surely the strangest collection of gifts ever seen, but every one an offering of love.

They were disappointed to find the "children's room" locked; only Honor smiled about it; she was the confidante of both sides.

"Jack's people" knew that they were invited to supper the next night, but this was all they knew. They meant to come, for "our little lady," as they called her now, had written every one of the notes, and what if some of the invited guests could not read them? They could come all the same. They did; they filled all the lower floor of the house, and when they saw the great Christmas tree in the "children's room," they knew why the door was locked the night before. Jack tried to make a speech, choked, stopped, and was cheered as if he had carried them away with his eloquence.

Alma succeeded better. "Put me on a chair," she whispered to Jack; "quick Brother Jack, please!" Then aloud: "I am so glad you have all come! How very nice you all look! And thank you, oh, thank you! for all my presents. I never had such a happy Christmas before, and it is all because of you. I love you very much. Now I am going to sing to you the Christmas hymn, and then Brother Jack will give you the things off the tree—they are only little things, but Honor and I made a good many of them ourselves—and then we will go to supper, twelve at a time, you know, because of the table, and the other twelves will help when it isn't their turn."

Cheering again, after somebody who had a strangely husky voice had said, "Our little lady, God bless her!"

And then, when silence fell once more, she lifted her sweet voice, and sang the dear old Christmas hymn which wakes an echo in so many hearts,

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night."

The five or six English women there were crying softly before she stopped, but the tears were healing tears. And Jack was thinking—thinking of the "alternate reading" which is given to a certain loved verse in the Bible. "Peace on earth to men of good-will."

"The little sister," makes a speech.

A LIBRARY EVERYWHERE.

SOMETHING FOR WORKERS AND CANVASSERS TO PONDER OVER.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR FORMING LENDING LIBRARIES IN CONNECTION WITH SCHOOLS OR MECHANICS' INSTITUTES OR OTHER CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS.

Like, probably, most other great English speaking cities, Montreal owes much to the town of Paisley where the weavers many years ago were noted for their intelligence through the lending and reading of newspapers and books and the discussions of all important subjects in public debate. Among other things Canada owes to it the *Witness*. Every town in Canada might in turn become a centre of blessing to the world by possessing itself of light whose very nature is to diffuse itself. The *Witness* is anxious to contribute to this end in more ways than one and now offers a scheme by which every family in Canada may become a member of a lending library. In doing so we count on aid from those school inspectors and teachers who have assisted us so nobly in our endeavor, which many of them have informed us has been successful, to promote the study of Canadian history and of the art of composition.

We base our proposition on the assumption that every day school should have a lending library. Many of the best and most progressive schools have such libraries. We want each one to be so provided. We think it is not too much to assume also, that every family would be benefited as well as interested by reading the *Witness* every week.

We now suggest how both of those desirable objects may be accomplished. Let some influential person in each school section or in each neighborhood in which a library is desirable, either on his own responsibility or with the sanction of a committee who will work with him, organize a systematic canvass for subscriptions to the *Witness*. On every subscription of three dollars to the *Daily Witness* forwarded to us he will be credited with seventy-five cents on behalf of the library for which he is working; on every subscription of a dollar to the *Weekly Witness* forwarded to us he will be credited with twenty-five cents for this purpose; and for every subscription of thirty cents to the *Northern Messenger* he will be credited with five cents. When the full amount that can be obtained in the neighborhood is reached, and we are notified of the fact, we will send him a list of books from which he or others with him may select to the amount of the commission to his credit the nucleus of a lending library which will be open to every subscriber in this library club or to every family represented in the school. In addition, we engage to purchase at the lowest price, for which we have special facilities, any other books not on our catalogue that may be chosen, if procurable, and send them in place of the others. A library so formed may be added to by gifts from individuals and by other volumes obtained in the same manner as above indicated by a still further addition to the list. By this means the choicest books in the English language may be placed in the hands of the residents of every section of the country at cost of nothing to those who interest themselves in it.

See how this plan works. Say that fifty subscriptions are sent in for the *Weekly Witness*. That would ensure twelve and a half dollars' worth of books, as a starter, which can be added to as time goes on. This would mean, say, twenty-five standard works to be read by these fifty families during the year. Thus, by the unselfish system of co-operation, for one dollar each man receives the *Weekly Witness* for a year, which is ridiculously cheap at the price, and the reading of twenty-five works, while these will remain in the possession of the library association until worn out.

The great essential for this work is one, two or three generous, patriotic, energetic men or women, who are earnest and enthusiastic in the formation of such a library, particularly for the young, whose taste for reading may be correctly formed. They should not have much difficulty in gathering to their assistance others like them, and the work once well begun is more than half completed.

To stimulate the ardor of the promoters of those libraries to think of large things, we will give a bonus of $1.25 when twenty-five dollars shall have been sent in in any library list and $1.75 in addition when the list swells to fifty dollars, $2 further when it grows to seventy-five dollars, and $2.25 more when it grows to one hundred dollars. Thus, for a list of one hundred names and one hundred dollars we will give books to the value of $32.25 at wholesale prices, or to very nearly fifty dollars at retail prices. But we have a further incentive to large lists.

For the largest list received before or on the last day of March, 1891, we will give to the school or library association in books as may be chosen or in cash	$100.00
For the second largest list we will give	50.00
For the third largest list we will give	25.00
" fourth " " " "	15.00
" fifth " " " "	10.00

THE *WEEKLY WITNESS* ENLARGED.

Last year the *Weekly Witness* was enlarged about the extent of one page. Onward, is still the motto, and henceforward and during the coming year it will be eight columns a week larger than ever. This enlargement is equal to a page and one column a week, an addition of some fifteen percent, almost equivalent to an additional two months' papers in a year. This is a free gift to the subscribers in place of an exquisite picture which we had proposed to make a present of to every subscriber. We anticipate that in return we will receive from interested subscribers a very large increase in our subscription lists, the result of their cordial recommendation and active advocacy of the *Witness*.

SPECIAL PREMIUMS.

For the benefit of those friends who do not care to work in the Library Competition and still are anxious to engage in the canvass to increase its circulation, we give below the list of clubbing rates and special book and other premiums, so that every worker may have an opportunity of benefiting himself directly as well as the *Witness* and *Northern Messenger* and his neighbor.

CASH COMMISSIONS.

These will be mailed on receipt of a request to that effect; containing a one cent stamp.

CLUBBING RATES.

Two subscriptions to the *Daily Witness* in one envelope	$5.00
For each additional subscription added to this club sent at the same time	2.50
One subscription each to the *Daily* and *Weekly Witness* in one envelope	3.75
Three subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* in one envelope	2.40
Four subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* in one envelope	3.00
Ten subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* in one envelope	7.00
Each additional subscription over ten sent on behalf of this club	.70
Daily Witness and *Messenger*	3.20
Weekly Witness " "	1.25

Northern Messenger.

Club of 10 copies to one address	2.25
" 20 " " "	4.40
" 50 " " "	10.50
" 100 " " "	20.00

BOOK PREMIUMS.

NUTTALL'S STANDARD DICTIONARY, new edition, revised, extended and improved up to date; 100,000 references, comprising many thousands of new words which modern literature, science and art have called into existence and common usage; with pronunciations, etymologies definitions, appendices of proper names, illustrations, familiar proverbs and quotations and geographical names. It is well printed on good paper and well bound, a volume of 816 pages, and wonderful value for the price. It will be sent postage free to every old subscriber who sends his renewal and two new subscriptions to the Weekly *Witness* at $1.00 each; or who sends us two subscriptions to the *Daily Witness* at $3.00 each. Five subscriptions to the *Messenger* at thirty cents will count as one for the Weekly *Witness*. It will be sent by mail for $1.00 in addition to the subscription to any of our papers.

CRUDEN'S COMPLETE CONCORDANCE to the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, edited by William Youngman. The publishers claim for this work that it is "The best and completest edition in the world of Cruden's Complete Concordance to the Bible; contains a concordance to the Apocrypha, alphabetical lists of the proper names in the Old and New Testaments with their meaning or significations in the original languages, a concordance to the proper names, a summary to the contents of all the chapters of the New Testament; more references and more supplementary matter of great value than in any other popular concordance."

This most valuable volume will be sent on the same conditions as Nuttall's Dictionary.

SONGS OF THE GREAT DOMINION, selected and edited by William Douw Lighthall, M.A. This is a most beautiful book, well suited to gift purposes. It is the best collection of Canadian songs extant. It is obtaining a large sale in England, and deserves to be very largely circulated in Canada. It contains a wealth of Canadian poetry which is quite a revelation to most readers. This book will be sent free to any old subscriber who sends his own and three more subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* at $1.00 each, or two subscriptions to the *Daily Witness* at $3.00 each; five subscriptions to the *Northern Messenger* at 30 cents each to count as one to the *Weekly Witness*.

NUGENT'S FRENCH-ENGLISH AND ENGLISH-FRENCH DICTIONARY.—This is a small but valuable standard French and English Dictionary. This book will be sent for one old and one new subscription to the *Weekly Witness* at $1.00 each; or for one new subscription to the *Daily Witness* at $3.00, or for ten subscriptions to the *Northern Messenger* at 30 cents each.

SHAKESPEARE.—The Universal Edition of Shakespeare, large type, from the earliest editions of Shakespeare. This is a volume of 1,124 clearly printed pages. This book will be sent on the same conditions as Nugent's French Dictionary.

ALBION RECITERS, Temperance, Humorous and Sunday-School. These books will meet a long-felt want. The selections are, as a rule, high-class and appropriate. They are the best books of the kind that we remember to have seen, and should be in great demand. Either one will be sent to any old subscriber to the *Weekly Witness* who sends with his renewal a new subscription to the *Weekly Witness* at $1.00, or the three for a new subscription to the *Daily Witness* at $3 00; or one will be sent for five new subscriptions to the *Northern Messenger* at 30 cents each.

CHAMBERS' JOURNAL.—The first nine months of *Chambers' Journal* for 1889, bound in covers making a volume of 620 double column pages, beautifully printed on heavy paper. A most interesting budget of interesting and valuable matter. This volume will be sent on the same terms as Nugent's French Dictionary.

OTHER PREMIUMS.

ANEROID BAROMETER, for telling the prospective changes in the weather. Every farmer should have one. Sent for fifteen new subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* at one dollar each; one subscription to the *Daily Witness* to count as two to the *Weekly*; and five subscriptions to the *Northern Messenger* to count as one to the *Weekly Witness*.

DAIRY THERMOMETER, seven inches, which will give the proper temperature for scalding, for cheese, for churning and for freezing, in addition to the graduated scale. For one subscription to the *Weekly Witness*.

BLACK WOOD THERMOMETER, eight inches, on same terms as Dairy Thermometer.

BOXWOOD THERMOMETER, eight inches, sent for two new subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* and one to the *Daily Witness*.

MINIMUM THERMOMETER, Boxwood, eight inches, which will register the lowest temperature during the night; sent for three subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness*, or one each to the *Daily* and *Weekly Witness*; five to the *Northern Messenger* to count as one to the *Weekly Witness*.

CASE OF DRAWING INSTRUMENTS sent on the same terms as the Minimum Thermometer.

RUBBER EYE GLASSES, colored, to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun and snow; sent for two new subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness*, at $1 each.

NICKEL SPECTACLES, best quality glass. Instructions how to choose the proper numbers will be sent to each winner. A pair of these spectacles for four subscriptions to the *Weekly Witness* at $1 each.

EYE-GLASSES, nickel, best quality glass, no easier or better fitting eye-glass made. Sent on the same conditions as spectacles.

HAND-READER OR MAGNIFIER, two and a quarter inches in diameter; silver plated rim and ebony handle. Sent on same terms as spectacles.

SCHOLARS' MAGNIFIERS, in folding handle, sent for one new subscription to the *Weekly Witness* at $1. These are useful for the study of botany or for examining grain or cloths.

LIST OF PANSY BOOKS.

The English edition of the Pansy Library, with about 400 pages in each book, very handsomely bound in cloth, large clear type. Any one of this series of 27 volumes, as follows, will be sent for one new subscription to the *Weekly Witness* at $1 00 or five new subscriptions to the *Northern Messenger* at 30c. each:—1. Four Girls at Chautauqua. 2. Little Fishers and their Nets. 3. Three People. 4. Echoing and Re-Echoing. 5. Christie's Christmas. 6. Divers Women. 7. Spun from Fact. 8. The Chautauqua Girls at Home. 9. The Pocket Measure. 10. Julia Reid. 11. Wise and Otherwise. 12. The King's Daughter. 13. Links in Rebeca's Life. 14. Interrupted. 15. The Master Hand. 16. An Endless Chain. 17. Esther Reid. 18. Esther Reid Yet Speaking. 19. The Man of the House. 20. Ruth Erskine's Crosses. 21 Household Puzzles. 22. Those Boys. 23. Modern Prophets. 24. The Randolphs. 25. Mrs. Solomon Smith Looking On. 26. From Different Standpoints. 27. A New Graft on the Family Tree.

PANSY BOOKS IN PAPER COVERS.

Any subscriber to the *Messenger* who sends in with his renewal subscription one new one, each at thirty cents, will receive one of the Pansy Stories; for five cents extra the new subscriber will also receive one of these books. Each story is in an illuminated paper cover and illustrated. The names of the stories published in this form are as follows: 1. The King's Daughter. 2. Wise and Otherwise. 3. Four Girls at Chautauqua. 4. The Chautauqua Girls At Home. 5. Three People. 6. *An Endless Chain.* 7. *Esther Reid.* 8. Esther Reid Yet Speaking. 9. Ruth Erskine's Crosses. 10. Mrs. Solomon Smith Looking On. 11. Chrissie's Endeavor. 12. Links in Rebecca's Life. The last three have been added within a few weeks.

PICTURES.

Good pictures are always in demand. We offer no new picture this year, but again advertise those of last year, orders for which are continually dropping in. They are:

"A Scottish Raid," by Rosa Bonheur.
"The Horse Fair," by Rosa Bonheur.
"The Angelus," by Millet.
"Christ Before Pilate," by Munkacsy.

One old and one new subscription to the *Weekly Witness*, at $1.00 each, will entitle each subscriber to any one of these pictures as he may choose. Any subscriber remitting $1.15 with his renewal subscription will have his choice of these pictures.

THE PAPERS IN NEWFOUNLAND.

Newfoundland and Canada at the present are foreign countries, according to the postal union regulations, which theoretically controls the foreign postage rates between the different countries affected by it. Under these regulations the postage on the copies of the *Weekly Witness* going to Newfoundland is two cents a copy, it being a shade heavier than the single rate weight. The postal authorities of the two countries, however, tacitly accept the paper at one rate, being one cent an issue or fifty-two cents a year. We, therefore, require to add fifty cents to the price of the *Weekly Witness* going to Newfoundland either singly or in clubs; that is, if a single subscription is sent the price will be $1.50; if a club of four $1.25 for each, and if a club of ten $1.20 for each.

Twenty six cents must be added for postage to the price of each copy of the *Northern Messenger*, whether singly or in clubs.

We hope that this exorbitant rate of newspaper postage between colonies so near together and so closely allied in interests will soon be done away with. As long as newspapers are sent to the United States free, and to Great Britain at one cent a pound, there seems to be no reasonable excuse for the continuance of the present monstrous imposition of postage on newspapers between the two colonies, and it should be made as light as possible. We request our many subscribers in Newfoundland as well as those in Canada to use what influence they can to have it reduced to the lowest reasonable amount.

To introduce them, one in every County or town furnished reliable persons (either sex) who will promise to Show it. Excelsior Music Box Co., Box 2120, N.Y. City.

90 lovely Scrap-book Pictures, with package of beautiful Sample Cards; list of 100 illustrated premiums and recipes for making 100 kinds of Ink, *Free*. Send a three cent stamp for mail, or ten cents for the above and your name on twenty new style Embossed Gold, Ragged Edge, etc., Cards. Address HALL BROS. & CO., Bolton Centre, P.Q.

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